

FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

DICK DARRELL'S NERVE; OR, FROM ENGINE-HOUSE TO MANAGER'S OFFICE.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



Quick as a flash, Dick seized the candlestick and flung it into the rascal's face. The fellow threw up his hands, but not quick enough to avoid getting a stunning blow on the forehead. He uttered a roar of pain.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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DICK DARRELL'S NERVE

OR, FROM ENGINE-HOUSE TO MANAGER'S OFFICE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—A Young Tyrant and His Victim.

"Whoop-ee!"

With a wild, lusty yell a tattered, black-faced boy, with bare, sooty legs, sprang out of the doorway of the Keystone breaker a quarter of a minute after the whistle for knocking off work for the day began its shrill toot. A stream of other smoky-looking lads, whose ages ranged from ten to thirteen, followed at his heels, whooping like a band of Comanche Indians executing a weird war-dance.

The whole crew, led by the first youth, whose name was Micky Grady, dashed down the flight of wooden stairs on the outside of the building, and began a stampede for the near-by village, where they lived in poor-looking cottages built by the coal company and rented to its employees. A short distance away stood the culm-heap, a massive pile of coal-dust covering acres of ground, and stretching down to the brink of a big river, whose deep waters rolled by, dark and forbidding, in the gathering twilight. The long valley was dotted over with several such black and unsightly heaps, made up of the refuse and dust of coal, as gathered from it during its process of preparation in the Keystone and other breakers.

Both in summer and winter it was a common thing to see numbers of ragged, black-faced and bare-footed girls, and grown-up women, too, with black bags, scattered over these heaps gathering up the stray fragments of coal that lay there, and were thrown in with the slate by the careless slate-pickers. These scavengers of the culm-heaps were called "black crows," and it was the constant delight of the breaker-boys to tease and annoy those that seemed to be fair game for their jibes. On this particular afternoon, or rather evening, for dusk was slowly creeping upon the face of nature, a little girl of ten years, all alone, was filling her bag and preparing to return home with the fuel she had collected, when the breaker-boys were released from their work.

"There's a black crow!" yelled one of the rudest boys, catching sight of the little girl.

"Let's throw her into the river?" said one chap, making a bluff to run up the culm-heap.

"Hold on, fellers," interposed Micky Grady, pausing in his rush for home. "That looks like

Pansy Blossom. You don't want to touch her, or you'll have Dick Darrell after you like a ton of bricks."

"Who cares for Dick Darrell?" replied the youth who had suggested throwing the girl into the river. "Me brother Packy kin knock the stuffin' out of him."

"He can—like fun," replied Grady scornfully. "He can't lick one side of Dick Darrell, and you know it."

"What do yer know what me brother kin do?" snorted the rough lad, who answered to the name of Jimmy Sanders. "Mebbe yer think yer kin lick me, Micky Grady?"

"I can lick you with one hand," returned Grady, starting for Jimmy.

Young Sanders, believing that discretion was the better part of valor, was about to take to his heels when a big, husky, freckle-faced boy suddenly appeared on the scene. Jimmy recognized him as his brother Packy, and his courage returned.

"You jest come in time, Packy," said Jimmy. "Micky Grady was goin' to slug me wit' a piece of coal, 'cause he can't lick me wit' his fists."

"He was, eh?" growled Packy, glowering at Grady. "Jest let me catch him a-doin' it and 'll knock him lop-sided."

"He's a liar!" cried Micky indignantly. "Do you see any coal in my hand?"

"He dropped it when he seen yer," chipped in Jimmy.

"I dropped nothin'," replied Micky, shaking his fist threateningly at Jimmy.

"If you touch my brother I'll push yer face in. Understand?" roared Packy.

"Aw, forget it!" snorted Micky, backing away, for he was no match for Jimmy's big brother.

"He says Dick Darrell kin knock blue blazes out of yer wit' one hand," said Jimmy.

"Did you say that?" Packy demanded of Grady.

"I said you couldn't lick one side of Dick Darrell, and I say it ag'in," replied Micky, backing still further away.

"I kin lick two like him, if yer want to know it," ejaculated Packy, his eyes twinkling with anger.

While the foregoing dialogue was going on the little girl remained standing on the top of the culm-heap. All the breaker-boys, with the ex-

ception of Micky and Jimmy, had disappeared in the distance, but she was afraid to come down while Jimmy and his big brother were in the vicinity. She didn't fear Micky, because she recognized him as a friend. Grady was right when he said her name was Pansy Blossom.

She was a pretty girl when tidied up, and the youngest daughter of Ben Blossom, a shiftless miner, who was drunk more than half his time.

Their poor but well-kept little home in the village was presided over by his sister Myrtle, sixteen years of age, and the belle of the mining village. Myrtle had many admirers, on account of her beauty and lovely disposition. Two of these only we need mention—Dick Darrell, whom she favored, and Packy Sanders, whom she detested. Dick Darrell, the hero of this story, was a good-looking, stalwart boy of eighteen. He had drifted into the mining regions nearly five years since, and had got a job as mule driver in the galleries below the surface.

After working four years in the gloomy depths where the black diamonds were dug out, he was transferred, as general helper, to the engine-room attached to the breaker house. He boarded at the Blossom cottage, and it was largely his money that kept the pot boiling.

Packy Sanders was the oldest son of Bill Sanders, a miner, and he was generally regarded as a hard case. He had a standing grouch against Dick Darrell because Dick was his superior in every way, and, furthermore, he hated him because he stood first favorite with Myrtle Blossom, while he (Packy) wasn't in it with her even a little bit. Packy would not admit that he had any doubts about his ability to put it all over Darrell if the two came to blows, but just the same he did not court an encounter with the sturdy engineer's assistant. Micky Grady was a particular friend of Darrell's, and his sarcastic remark that Packy "couldn't lick one side of Dick Darrell" made young Sanders furious.

"Just wait till I catch you, Micky Grady! I'll wipe the ground with yer," said Packy in answer to the slate-picker's defiant reply.

"You'll wipe the ground with nothin', you lobster, unless it is your own face!" retorted Micky, emboldened because Packy made no attempt to go for him.

"There's one of them black crows all by herself on the heap behind yer," put in Jimmy Sanders. "Micky says if we touch her we'll have Dick Darrell after us like a ton of bricks. I guess you and me don't care not'in' about Darrell. That gal hain't got no right 'round here at this time of the day, and we ought to go up there, take her bag of coal away and chase her home, if only to show that we hain't afraid of Dick Darrell or anybody like him."

Packy looked up at the summit of the culm-heap and saw Pansy standing there waiting for him and Jimmy to go away. He didn't recognize her, as her face was streaked with coal-dust, and her loose hair was flying about it. Ordinarily he wouldn't have bothered with one of the "black crows," even to oblige his brother; but Micky Grady's remark had galled him, and he determined to annoy the girl if only to make Darrell mad when he heard about it. Accordingly, calling on his brother to follow, Packy sprang up the side of the black mound with a yell, echoed by Jimmy.

"Run, you little black crow, or we'll duck you in the river!" roared Packy menacingly.

Pansy, instead of taking to her heels and flying across the heap, as they looked for her to do, for their purpose was to chase her first, and frighten her as much as possible before they deprived her of her bag of coal and pushed her down into the road, stood stock-still, terrorized by their sudden rush. Packy soon reached the top of the heap of coal-dust, with his brother close behind him.

"Run, I tell yer, run, yer black crow! Run for yer life!" he roared, rushing at her like a miniature cyclone.

Pansy was too frightened to either run or scream. Holding her bag of coal pressed tightly against her body she sank on her knees and bent over it to protect it. This action on her part disappointed Pack and made him mad. He wanted the fun of chasing her. Finding that she wouldn't move, Packy made a swoop at her bag of coal, and seizing it, tried to tear it from her. Then Pansy found her tongue and began to scream, while she hugged her precious burden closer to her.

"Let go, will yer?" snarled Packy, losing his temper. "Let go, or it will be wuss for yer!"

"Help! Help!" cried Pansy, clinging desperately to the bag that contained the fruits of a hard hour's toil.

"Shut up!" roared Packy.

Jimmy, without offering to help his big brother, gazed on the scrap with intense delight. The little girl's frantic fight to save her bag of black diamonds was grand fun for him, while her success in retaining a grip upon it enraged Packy. Exerting his strength he fairly raised her in the air and swung her off her feet. At that intense moment a newcomer, followed by Micky Grady, appeared on the scene. He wore an oil-stained blouse, and his face was dark and streaky with grease and the grime of the engine-room. In a word, it was Dick Darrell. He bounded up the culm-heap with clenched fists and fire in his eyes, spurred on by Pansy's piteous screams. As he reached the top and rushed at Packy, intent on putting a stop to his attack on the little girl, Pansy, swinging in the air, lost her grasp on the bag. She was flung clear over the outer edge of the mound, while Packy, losing his balance by the unexpected release of her weight, fell back head over heels in the coal-dust, the bag dropping from his hands. With a shrill scream of terror Pansy rolled down with swift momentum to the foot of the heap of coal-dust and bounded off into the river with a splash, the water closing over her head. Dick reached the edge of the mound in time to see her disappear. With a gasp of consternation he tore down the side and dived in after her.

CHAPTER II.—Saved from the River.

As the dark waters flowed serenely over the spot where Pansy and Dick had disappeared in quick succession, Micky Grady and Jimmy Sanders ran to the edge of the mound and gazed down at the river in a species of terror. Packy, after wallowing in the dust, pulled himself together, gazed stupidly around after his victim, and then, with a cowardly fear gripping his heart, he slouched up beside his brother and Micky.

"Where's the crow?" he asked his brother in faltering tones.

"In the river," replied Jimmy. "Yer t'rowed her in."

"Ye're a liar! I didn't. She fell in herself," he answered, shaking all over, not from a sense of remorse, but for fear of possible consequences to himself.

"I seen you do it, too," said Micky Grady, feeling that he could afford to be as bold as he chose under the circumstances. "If she's drowned you'll be hung."

Packy turned white at the bare thought of such a fate.

"Don't get skeered," said Jimmy. "Somebody ran up and jumped in after her."

"That was Dick Darrell," said Micky. "There he is now, and he's got hold of her."

The boys could just see two heads on the surface of the river a short distance away. From the movement of one of the heads there was no doubt but it was Darrell's. He was swimming up the river, with the unconscious form of Pansy supported by his left arm, and he was looking for a place to land. Dick was a strong swimmer, but he made slow progress against the river. By swimming against the current he had only a hundred feet to go to find a place to step ashore, and toward that spot Micky ran to assist him. Grady waited for the engineer's assistant to approach.

"Raise the gal up to me, Dick," he said, reaching down his arm.

Darrell did so, and Micky, seizing the insensible Pansy by the hand, hauled her on the bank.

"She ain't dead, is she?" asked the slate-picker apprehensively.

"No," replied Dick. "She'll come around all right."

The speaker dragged himself out of the water, and picking the little girl up in his arms started for the engine-room with her.

"You ought to lick the stuffin' out'r Packy Sanders for throwin' her in," said Micky earnestly.

"I'm going to report his conduct to the justice, though I hardly think he meant to throw Pansy into the river. He's pretty tough, but it doesn't seem possible that he had murder in his heart."

Pansy began to stir in Dick's arms, and by the time they reached the door of the engine-house she had recovered her senses. She recognized Darrell and clung convulsively to him.

"You're all right, Pansy," said Dick encouragingly.

"I thought I was in the water," she faltered.

"You were in the water, but you're safe on shore again."

"How came you to save me, Dick?" asked the girl. "I didn't see you around."

"I reached the top of the heap just as you went over the edge and rolled down to the water," replied the engineer's assistant.

"And you jumped in after me?"

"Yes. I wasn't going to stand by and see you drown."

Pansy threw her arms around the boy's neck and kissed him.

"Hello!" said Murray, the engineer, coming to the door and noting the dripping condition of Darrell and the little girl. "You look as if you'd been in the river, Dick. Did you jump in after that girl?"

Dick said he did.

"How did she come to fall in?"

Dick explained.

"Who is she?"

"Pansy Blossom," replied the boy.

"One of old Blossom's gals, eh? It's lucky for her you were on hand to fish her out of the river, otherwise she'd have been drowned, I guess."

"I'm afraid she would," replied Dick.

"She's a sight. Must have been picking coal on the culm-heap."

"That's what she was. She will do it, though Myrtle and I have tried to stop her."

"Take her into the boiler-room. The heat will dry some of the dampness out of her clothes, and yours, too. Then you'd better take her right home. I'll stay here and finish your work."

"Thank you, Mr. Murray," said Dick.

Murray, who had followed them into the boiler-room, now returned to his own department to finish what had to be done for the night. It was pretty near dark by this time, and while Pansy stood before the open furnace door she bewailed the loss of her bag and the coal it contained.

"I'll go up on the heap and see if I can find it," volunteered Micky, starting for the doorway.

He returned inside of a few minutes with the bag and its contents intact.

"There you are, Pansy," he said in a tone of satisfaction. "Don't say I never done nothin' for you."

The girl thanked him in a shy manner. She liked Micky in her childish way just as the slate-picker liked her. As soon as Dick thought Pansy was dry enough to stand the night air he said that they would start for home. Micky accompanied them a large part of the way and then left them and went home. Supper was all ready and waiting at the Blossom cottage when Dick and Pansy arrived. Myrtle fairly gasped when she saw the condition of her sister.

"Pansy Blossom! You naughty girl! You've been to the culm-heap again."

"Worse than that, Myrtle," said Dick. "She's been in the river."

"In the river!" cried Myrtle, turning pale.

She grabbed her sister and felt of her rumpled dress.

"How did it happen?" she said, turning to Dick.

The boy told her the particulars as far as he was acquainted with them.

"She would have been drowned only for you, Dick," replied Myrtle with tears in her eyes. "You don't know how grateful I am to you. It would have broken my heart if anything had happened to her."

"Well, as long as she's safe and uninjured you have no cause to worry."

"I shall never forget what we both owe you as long as I live," replied the girl.

"All right," said the boy lightly, "we'll let it go at that."

Myrtle seized her sister and hurried her upstairs to her room, while Dick went to his room to change his own damp garments and tidy himself up.

CHAPTER III.—The Shadow of Trouble.

After supper that evening Dick Darrell, taking Pansy with him, called on Justice Robinson, who exercised a supervision over the moral welfare

of the mining village. He explained to the justice what had happened on the culm-heap that evening, and said he thought Packy Saunders ought to be punished in some way for bullying a little girl like Pansy, and nearly causing her death. Mr. Robinson asked the girl to tell her story, which she did.

"This isn't the first complaint I've had about that lad," said the justice. "He has a bad reputation. It's time he was brought up with a round turn."

The lawyer sent Dick out to find the chief constable. When Darrell returned with the officer the justice handed the constable a warrant for Packy's arrest and told him to go over to the Sanders cottage and serve it. Jimmy Sanders was in the yard when he saw Constable Green enter by the front gate. Everybody in the village knew the officer, and Jimmy, suspecting that the constable was after his brother, rushed into the kitchen where Packy was sitting.

"Yer want to get out of here quick, Packy," he said excitedly.

"What for?" replied his brother in a disagreeable tone.

"'Cause Constable Green is after yer. Hear him poundin' on the front door?"

"How do yer know it's the constable?"

"I seen him come in the yard."

That was enough for Packy. He grabbed his cap and made for the back door.

"Where yer goin'?" asked his brother.

"Dunno," he answered. "Mebbe across the river."

"You wait down by the wharf till I come. I'll try and find out if Green came to pinch yer for throwin' Pansy Blossom into the river tonight."

"What else would he want me for?" growled Packy as he laid his hand on the back fence and prepared to vault over it into the yard of a vacant cottage.

"He might want yer for somet'in' else, yer can't tell. Didn't yer tell me that yer pinched a dollar bill out of Dan Crowley's pocket last night when yer helped him home from the tavern, 'cause he was too drunk to walk alone?"

At that moment the back door opened and Packy's mother looked out and called him. He sprang over the fence in a moment and started across the weed-grown yard for the street beyond, leaving Jimmy to explain the cause of his sudden disappearance. Constable Green failed to arrest Packy, and so reported to the justice.

"Well, you have the warrant," said the lawyer. "You can arrest him in the morning at the breaker."

Packy, however, knew better than to report for work in the morning. By that time he was hiding on board a stranded coal barge a mile below the village, where he believed he was safe from the constable. Jimmy knew where his brother was, and at Packy's request had tipped off a couple of his vicious associates, who were not working, to his place of refuge. Packy arranged with these young rascals to keep him supplied with food, and they also spent most of their time with him in the hold of the barge, playing cards and smoking cigarettes. On the morning following the incident at the culm-heap Dick was busily engaged polishing up a part of the brasswork on the engine when Murray, the engineer, who maintained a very friendly attitude toward him,

stopped beside him, and after watching his nimble fingers for a moment or two, said:

"I s'pose you heard that Martin Drake was discharged yesterday morning?"

"Yes. What was he discharged for?"

"Because he takes too much booze, for one thing; but chiefly because he's got to be a shirker. Taylor, who knows when a man works and when he loafes, swears he won't have him about the mine doing nothing but getting the rest of the miners all in a tangle. So he paid him off and fired him."

"Did he put up much of a kick?"

"He did that. He told the superintendent that the Miners' Alliance, of which he is one of the officers, would demand his reinstatement."

"Then there may be trouble over his discharge?" said Dick, transferring his attention to another brass oil-cup.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there was," replied the engineer. "Drake has got the ear of most of the officers of the Alliance, not because he lagged at his work, but because the company knows he is powerful in the society, and is aiming a blow at the union through him."

"Mr. Taylor is superintendent, and has a right to discharge anyone for cause, hasn't he?" asked Dick.

"That is certainly part of his business. He's responsible for the conduct of things at the mine, and is accorded a free hand by the company, the officers of which have every confidence in his ability. At any rate, he's evidently made good, for he's been in full charge these five years."

"Well, I don't see what Drake can do. If he's bounced he's bounced, and that settles it."

"The Miners' Alliance is a strong organization. It takes in every miner in the district. Drake is a smooth talker. If he can convince the heads of the society that his discharge is really a slap at the Alliance, they may make it a union job, and then there'll be mischief."

"Do you mean to say that the Alliance would demand that Drake be put back to work after he's fired for good reasons?"

"If the society believes that Drake has been discharged chiefly because he is a strenuous union man it will certainly demand his reinstatement."

"But if the society sends a committee to Mr. Taylor he will explain exactly why he discharged Drake. That will show that unionism had nothing to do with the case."

"The Alliance might not accept the superintendent's statement as the real expression of his own, or the company's, feelings on the subject."

"You're a member of the Alliance, aren't you, Mr. Murray?"

"I'm rather an important member of the Keystone Branch, for I'm the local secretary."

"I judge from your talk that you believe Drake has only got what was coming to him."

"Between you, me and the post, lad, that is my opinion."

"Then your word with the society ought to be as good as Drake's."

"I'm afraid it isn't. He's vice-president of our branch, and is several times more popular than I am, because he spends his money freely, which I can't afford to do with my growing family, and is looked upon as a good fellow."

"If you see that Drake is making trouble just

to help himself out of a hole you can express your opinion, can't you?"

"Yes, I can do that; but I haven't the gift of gab that he has. I've seen him twist some of the men around his little finger as easily as you twist that bit of cotton waste around that oil-cup. Then there's another difficulty. A fellow must stick to his union even if the cause isn't as good as he'd like it to be. If our branch should vote to sustain Drake I'd have to fall in line no matter what my private opinion might be. You see, as local secretary I'm scarcely a free agent in any matter connected with the miners' union."

"Do you really think the society will support Drake?"

"It is impossible for me to say what our branch will do. You see, the men have several grudges against the company, anyway, which, for one reason or another, have never been brought to an issue. These things are bound to influence the feelings of the men, and it's just as like as not they'll put everything together and make a fight of it."

"But I don't see why the union should assume the right to dictate what the superintendent should not do. He's employed to run this mine. If the company is satisfied with the way he's doing it what right have the miners to interfere?"

"I'm afraid I can't argue the matter with you, Dick. When you get older, and join the union yourself, you'll come to understand things better."

"Perhaps I will, if I ever become a member of a union, but it is my ambition to be at the head of a business of my own."

"It takes capital to become one's own boss, and large capital, too, in these days of trusts and combinations of interests. The day of the small mine owner, and manufacturer, is almost past. How are you going to get a sufficient capital to start out on a paying basis?"

"That's a question the future must decide," replied Dick. "All I can say now is that a fellow with grit and energy has a good chance to succeed in this country. The man who lectured down here last winter on success in life said that Fortune knocks at the door of every man at least once in his lifetime. Well, I'm going to be on the watch for that one time. When Fortune comes she won't find me asleep, you can bet your life. I'll be on hand with both feet."

CHAPTER IV.—The Mischief Breeder.

Martin Drake soon demonstrated the strength of his influence over his fellow-workmen. He interviewed man after man on the quiet, and told the facts of his discharge in a skillful manner, so as to leave as far in the background as possible the superintendent's real motives in bouncing him. In addition to this, he got two or three of his particular friends to back him up, and to declare that the local branch of the Alliance had no choice but to make his grievance theirs, and to officially insist that he be put back to work again. He and his family ignored the notice served on them by the superintendent to vacate, within a reasonable time, the company's cottage occupied by them. Drake intended to leave no stone unturned to carry his point if he could. Late on the afternoon

of the day on which the conversation recorded in the previous chapter took place between the engineer and Dick Darrell, Drake appeared at the engine-room and buttonholed Murray. The engineer listened to his arguments with little enthusiasm, and the bounced miner scowled unpleasantly.

"If you ain't with me you're ag'in me, Jack Murray," Dick heard him say in a menacing kind of tone.

"I don't see that you've made out any kind of case against the super," replied the engineer in a conciliatory way, for no one knew better than Murray that Drake was a bad man to have for an enemy.

"I hain't?" snarled the visitor aggressively. "Why hain't I? This here matter concerns the society as much as it does me."

"I don't see how it does," answered Murray calmly.

"You mean you won't see it. Everyone I've talked to but you is agreed that somethin' ought to be done. I haven't paid my dues into the Alliance for six years and more to be trod on as if I was a worm. No man is goin' to sit on my neck, mark my words on that. I look to the society for my rights, seein' as I can't get justice myself from Taylor. What right has that man to discharge me after I've been here six years workin' hard for the company? If he can do that with impunity is your job safe, or anyone else's at the mine? You might be thrown down any day yourself, without notice, like I was, to make way for some favorite of the super's. I say this high-handed way of runnin' things has got to be nipped in the bud, or every man in the company's service is liable to be bullied and fired when Taylor chooses to show his authority."

"I haven't heard that any man who does right by the company has been interfered with in any way," replied Murray.

"I s'pose that is as much as to say that I hain't done the right thing?" snorted Drake. "I should have worked twice as hard, eh? I should have slaved till I dropped down dead, and left my family to be taken care of by the society? Well, I'm not built that way, d'ye understand? I'm a man, and not a mouse," and Drake thumped the wall of the engine-room with his fist.

"When a man boozes as much as you have the reputation of doing he isn't in condition to do his best work."

"Whose business is it whether I booze or not?" asked Drake wrathfully. "I don't do it in the company's time. After I knock off work I've a right to do as I think fit. Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours to do as you dern please. That's the motto of the society. Have you got anythin' to say ag'in it?"

"Of course not; but one can't sleep eight hours if he bums around the tavern till midnight."

"I s'pose that's a slap at me? Well, it ain't your business, or Taylor's, or anybody else's, whether I sleep eight hours or four hours as long as I work through the schedule time."

Murray said nothing, but mechanically took out his pipe, filled the bowl with tobacco from a fancy bag and lighted it with some deliberation.

"I've stuck by the society for six years, and I say the society should stick by me," Drake said as Murray began coaxing the tobacco into a red glow.

"The superintendent claims that he discharged you because you haven't done a fair day's work in a month," said the engineer.

"He's a liar! He sacked me because I'm an officer of the union."

"There are other officers besides you, myself, for instance, and I haven't heard that any of us are in danger of losing our heads."

"You will lose 'em in time. He had to begin with somebody, so he picked me out as the first victim."

"You'd better get your facts together, Drake, so as to be able to present them at the meeting tomorrow night. If you can show that your discharge has been made for the purpose of weakening the union in this district the society will support you all right."

"I can show it."

"You're a good talker, Drake, but mere words won't do any good. You must produce proof. Recollect, the company has a written agreement for three years with the union, and it has rights as well as we have."

"Yah!" snarled Drake, his eyes roving around the engine-room.

He saw Dick Darrell's gaze fastened on him with interested attention.

"What are you listenin' for, you young monkey?" he roared. "Git, d'ye understand? We don't want no kids around."

Dick moved slowly away, and as he did so he looked at the clock. He saw it wanted five minutes of five, closing down time. It was his duty to let off the whistle, so he sauntered as far as the door to put in the five minutes looking across the road at a score or more "black crows" strung along the top of the culm-heap, all busy with their black bags. Drake seemed to have reached the end of his tether, for he had little more to say about the matter that had brought him to the engine-room. The interview had been entirely unsatisfactory to him.

Thus it was when Dick blew the whistle which ended work for the day, Martin Drake left the engine-room thoroughly disgruntled and with an ugly scowl on his countenance. On the following night, at the regular monthly meeting of the Keystone Branch of the Miners' Alliance, Drake brought his grievance before the members. He was listened to with attention, and was supported by half a dozen of the best speakers. When the Drake bunch had said all they wanted to, Murray got up. Martin glared at him like a wild beast. He dreaded the engineer's cool, unimpassioned way of appealing to the common sense of the society. Murray, however, had very little to say on the subject. He merely advised the members to go slow about taking issue on a matter that was not as yet corroborated by sufficient evidence to warrant making it a union affair.

"I move that a committee be appointed to wait on Mr. Taylor and find out his side of the question," he said. "After the committee has reported to the president he can call a special meeting to consider the matter in all its bearings. If, in the meantime, Drake can secure proofs sufficient to substantiate his statements, it will greatly simplify the case, and the society may see its way clear to take some action looking to Drake's reinstatement."

Murray's motion was duly seconded, but before the president could put the question, Bill Sanders,

a particular crony of Drake's, jumped up and moved as an amendment to the motion that the committee be also instructed to request the superintendent to put Martin Drake back to work. The engineer, to Drake's satisfaction, offered no objection to the amendment, and the motion and amendment, on being put to a vote, were carried. The president then proceeded to appoint a committee of three, and Drake succeeded in getting Sanders selected as one of them. The meeting then adjourned, and while the majority of the miners went directly home to go to bed, Drake and his friends adjourned to the tavern to discuss across the bar further action in case the committee's report was not favorable.

CHAPTER V.—What Dick Overheard in the Tavern.

The committee appointed by the president of the society lost no time in waiting on Superintendent Taylor and stating the object of their visit. The superintendent received them in his private office and listened to the spokesman's request as to the cause of Drake's discharge. Taylor answered very frankly. He said that Drake's work and general conduct had been for some time very unsatisfactory. He had warned the man by deputy, but it did no good, so, as he wouldn't stand for any man who refused to do his full duty by the company, he had discharged him. The deputation heard the superintendent through and then made a request for his reinstatement, the spokesman intimating that the society expected it. The committee, in permitting their spokesman to insinuate that the society was back of Drake, exceeded their instructions, but Bill Sanders had bulldozed the other two into acting as he wished them to. The hint was not lost on Taylor, but he would not give way an inch.

"Look here, my men," he replied in a resolute tone, "when I say or do a thing I mean it. You ought to know that by this time. I want no loafers or trouble-breeders at this mine, and I won't have them. This is a matter between Drake and me, and your society has nothing whatever to do with it. As for taking him back to work, I refuse to do it. He's out now, and that means he's out for good. He and his family have already received notice to give up their cottage. Drake will be given a reasonable time in which to find a job elsewhere before a formal dispossession is served upon him. Now you have my answer, and I hope you understand that it is a final one. Under no circumstances will I reinstate your man."

"If you don't put him back there'll be trouble," said Sanders with an ugly look.

The superintendent turned on him like a flash.

"Are you authorized to make such a statement?" he said sharply.

Sanders looked confused and made no reply. Taylor turned to the spokesman and repeated his question.

"No, sir," replied the man, intimidated by the superintendent's manner.

"Then I am to understand that Sanders made that remark on his own responsibility?" continued Taylor. "Answer me!" he added sternly as the spokesman hesitated.

"Yes, sir."

"Another question, please. Are you officially instructed by the society to intimate to me that your branch proposes to make common cause with Drake?"

"No, sir," replied the man humbly.

"That's all. You have my answer. I wish you good-afternoon."

Ths dismissed, the three men slipped away from the other feeling very cheap indeed. As soon as they were outside the spokesman and his companion turned angrily on Sanders.

"You see what your fool advice has led to?" said the former. "We had no right to try and intimidate the super, and we've got it in the neck for doing it. If the members get wind of what we did we'll get a calling-down at the next meeting that will make our hair curl."

"You won't be such a fool as to tell, will you?" growled Sanders.

"Of course not, but the fact might leak out."

"How will it?"

"The superintendent is liable to comment on it, and in that way the men may get to hear about it."

"We kin deny that we said anythin' about the society bein' at Martin's back."

"Well, I don't like the hole we've put ourselves in. Instead of taking the super's answer and walking out like men we were dismissed like whipped curs, and we deserved it, too. It's all your fault, Bill Sanders," said the spokesman in disgust. "You talked us into putting up a big bluff, but it didn't work worth a cent. You got a pretty sharp and sweet call-down yourself, too. You'll be lucky if the super takes no further notice of your unauthorized remark."

"What do you mean by that?" snorted Sanders.

"You are liable to be a marked man in the company's book, and the super might easily find some excuse to bounce you, too."

"He'd better not," scowled Sanders. "Some-thing might happen to him if he did," added the man darkly.

"Do you mean to say you'd——"

"No matter what I mean. It's no one's business but my own," snarled Sanders.

His companions looked at him askance. They knew he would be an ugly man to have for an enemy. In fact, he, Drake, and two or three others, who formed a clique of their own, were fully capable of resorting to desperate expedients in order to get square on anybody who injured them. The three men, who had got leave of absence from their work to visit the superintendent, returned to their duties, and that evening reported the result of their mission to the president of the society. Sanders met Drake, as usual, at the tavern, and told him of the superintendent's ultimatum. Martin swore like a trooper, and said the society must be talked into taking up his case as a union matter.

"If you want to know my opinion, I don't think the society will stand by you," replied Sanders.

He then told Drake of the hobble the committee got in by intimating that the society was directly interested in his reinstatement.

"What did you want to do that for?" cried Drake angrily. "Ye've sp'iled my chances."

"Ain't that what you told me last night to do? What's the matter with you?"

Drake was obliged to admit that he had told Sanders to try and bulldoze the superintendent.

"We put our foot in by followin' your orders. The super flashed up in a moment and jumped on me like a ton of coal. I may get into trouble on account of it, but if I do, by the Lord Harry, the super will regret it."

Sanders brought his fist down on the table they were sitting at with a force that made the glasses jump, and drew the attention of the habitués in the place to them.

"So you think the society won't stand by me?" said Drake crustily.

"I'm afraid it won't. The super's answer is that he discharged you for cause. Kin you prove he didn't tell the truth?"

"I can't prove nothin'," growled the other.

"Well, there you are. If you can't prove nothin' the society won't do nothin'. The super says you're bounced for good. He won't take you back under any circumstances. What are you goin' to do about it?"

"Fight the matter out at the special meetin', and if I'm beaten——"

"Well?"

"I'll figure out some way to get square with the super and the company both. Are you game to help me?"

"That'll depend."

"On what?"

"How dangerous it is. I'm not goin' to cut my throat for no man."

"We can count on Hissop, Keating and Haley takin' a hand, too. We five have sworn to stick by one another."

"What do you propose to do?"

"I shan't say a word till I find out for certain that the society won't act. If I'm thrown down then I'll call on you chaps to help me out. Understand?"

Sanders nodded, and the two men left the table and walked out into the night. As they did so a boy's face appeared from behind a screen a couple of feet away and watched their exit from the tavern. The face belonged to Dick Darrell, who had been visiting a sick miner who roomed on the second floor of the tavern. He had been on his way out through the public room when he saw Drake and Sanders at the table. Not wishing to be seen there by them he had slipped behind the screen to wait until they went to the bar or left the place.

While behind the screen he couldn't help hearing all that passed between the two men, and the last part of their conversation rather unpleasantly impressed him. He knew that Drake was desperate enough to do most anything if driven to the wall; and he also knew that the man's four particular associates might be counted on to back him up under certain circumstances. As soon as Drake and Sanders left the tavern Dick came from behind the screen and walked out of the place, too.

"Looks as if Drake intended to make trouble for the company in case the society does not back him up. Mr. Murray told me today that he didn't think that the miners would consent to make an issue with the superintendent over the man unless he was able to show mighty good cause. Under the circumstances I think Drake and his friends will bear watching. I must tell Mr. Murray what I overheard of their talk. He may consider it wise to notify the superintendent."

Thus speaking Dick walked home.

CHAPTER VI.—In Which There Is Trouble to Burn.

Next day was Sunday, and Dick went out walking in the afternoon with Myrtle. Micky Grady also went out walking with Pansy about half an hour before. Though neither pair was aware of the fact, they each took the same direction down the river.

"Do you suppose Packy Sanders has left the neighborhood for good?" asked Myrtle.

"I guess he has," replied Dick. "Somebody must have tipped him off to the fact that Constable Green was after him. At any rate, he didn't show up at the breaker next morning, and hasn't been seen around the village since. So the constable, who was looking for him, told me yesterday. Micky tried to pump his brother Jimmy, who works with him in the breaker screen-room, but Jimmy, who handles the truth very carelessly, said he didn't know where Packy was."

By this time they had got below the long culm-heap and were approaching the stranded coal barge, which lay close to the river bank. Then it was that Dick noticed smoke rising above the tops of a thick clump of trees not far from the barge.

"I wonder who's built that fire and what for?" he said.

"Probably some of the boys from the village," replied Myrtle.

Dick sniffed the air.

"Do you know I smell tar?" he said. "They must be burning wood coated with tar. I'm going over to take a look."

Dick entered the little patch of wood without any particular caution, and walked up to the edge of a small clearing. The sight that met his gaze fairly staggered him for a moment or two. In the centre of the open space was a fire, above which, suspended in gypsy fashion to three long poles, was an old iron kettle, the contents of which Jimmy Sanders was stirring with a stick. A disreputable-looking pillow lay on the grass near it. Bound to a tree, within a few feet of the kettle, Dick was astonished to recognize Micky Grady. Secured to another tree close by, with a handkerchief tied tightly about her mouth to stifle her cries, was Pansy, looking very much frightened. Dancing in a weird way in front of Micky were Packy Sanders and two of his cronies, evidently in high glee.

"After we tar and feather yer we're goin' to ride yer on a rail," said Packy, pausing in his gyrations and addressing the prisoner.

"You're a lot of cowards," replied Micky defiantly. "Why don't you take a feller your own size?"

"Shut up," retorted Packy with an ugly look, "or I'll fill yer jaw full of melted tar! I owe yer a lickin' for callin' me a big stiff the other night. We'll let the lickin' go and give yer a tar-bath instead. When we get t'rough wit' yer you'll look like one of them ostriches I seen in a book once."

"He'll look more like the wild man of Borneo I seen last summer in a circus," said one of the other boys.

"Is the tar ready, Jimmy?" asked Packy.

"Yer have got to put the fire out and let it cool some," replied Jimmy.

"Aw, it won't burn him t'rough his clothes,"

said Packy. "Open the pillar, Pete. When I plaster him wit' a dab of tar you want to t'row a handful of feathers over it. We'll make him look like a bird on two feet," he added with a grin.

Packy took the stick with which his brother had been stirring the tar and tested its liquid consistency.

"That's all right," he said. "Pull the fire from under it, then we'll begin business."

Jimmy called on the fourth youth to help him, and between them they scattered the flames. The young rascals were so taken up with the job they had in hand that they did not notice the presence of Dick Darrell in the background among the trees. He had recovered from his surprise and was preparing to take action to rescue Pansy and Micky from the Sanders gang. Pansy was watching the proceedings with starting eyes, quite helpless to do anything for the relief of her plucky young escort, and fearing the worst kind of treatment was going to be handed out to Micky. Dick figured that he had no easy proposition on his hands, as Packy and his two cronies were as big and strong as he was. Then there was Master Jimmy to be reckoned with as a side issue. Dick saw that he must try and take the young ruffians by surprise, and in the confusion cut Micky loose. He could then depend on Grady making things interesting for Jimmy while he endeavored to beat off the other three with the stout stick he had picked up for that purpose. After considering the best plan to work he decided to begin with Pansy, to whom the rascals were paying no attention. He slipped around behind her, and with his pocket-knife quietly cut the cord which held her to the tree. As he crept away toward Micky, Pansy, finding herself free, tore the handkerchief from her mouth and let out a shrill scream that awoke the echoes of the neighborhood and startled the Sanders bunch.

"The gal's loose!" cried Packy. "Grab her, fellers, before she gets away!"

Jimmy and the other two boys started for her at once, but Pansy skipped out of the wood like a wild fawn, screaming as she went, and ran into her astonished sister's arms. The pursuers stopped on seeing Myrtle and consulted together. In the meantime Dick released Micky, and both attacked Packy, tripped him up and were tying his arms behind his back before he realized what was happening to him. As he opened his mouth to yell for help, Micky stuffed a handkerchief of earth and grass into it, sitting on Packy's chest to keep him down while Dick tied his ankles together.

"You didn't come this way any too soon, Dick," said Micky. "Packy and his gang nabbed me and Pansy while we was walkin' this way, and tied us to them trees, gaggin' Pansy so she couldn't scream for help. Then they brought that tar kettle from somewhere, rigged it up in the clearin' here, and started a fire under it. They were goin' to tar and feather me, and ride me on a rail. They'd have done it if you hadn't come up and stopped them."

"I guess they would," replied Dick, as he knotted the rope that had held Pansy about Packy's ankles. "Now, get up, grab this chap by the head and help me drag him out of sight among the bushes."

They carried the helpless young rascal twenty feet away and left him, then each with a stick in

hand, they started to find out how matters stood with Pansy, whose screams had ceased suddenly, and her sister. On the edge of the clearing they came face to face with Jimmy and the other two chaps, who had prudently concluded not to attack the two girls, but return, take revenge out of Micky, and then make themselves scarce. It was an unpleasant surprise for the trio to find Micky free and backed up by Dick Darrell, for whose prowess they entertained considerable respect. Dick and Micky gave them no time to consider what plan of action they should take under the circumstances, but attacked them at once, Darrell dropping his stick and using his fists. As Dick could slug some, and Micky prodded the enemy right and left with his club, they soon had the ruffians on the run. They followed the discomfited young rascals for perhaps a hundred feet and then rejoined the girls.

"Pansy has been telling me how Packy, his brother Jimmy, and their two friends, captured Micky and herself by coming up on them from behind," Myrtle said to Dick. "Did they really intend to cover your clothes with tar and sprinkle feathers over you, Micky?" she asked, turning to the little slate-picker.

"Bet your life they did," grinned Micky. "They were just startin' in to do it when Dick came up and cut Pansy and me loose, and then while three of them was chasin' Pansy we just piled in and done Packy up. He's lying back there in the bushes with his arms and legs bound and his mouth full of grass to keep him from hol-lerin'."

"Are you going to leave him there?" Myrtle asked Dick.

"No. Micky and I are going to march him to the village and hand him over to Constable Green."

Dick agreed with his companion, so they went to the spot where they had left Packy, cut his ankles loose and made him get on his feet.

"Now, then, forward, march!" ordered Dick sternly.

Packy favored him with a malignant glare and refused to budge.

"Won't do as you're told, eh?" said Dick. "Grab him by the arm, Micky, and make him start."

Packy struggled as well as he could and kicked Darrell in the leg. Dick picked up a stout switch and applied it with considerable vigor to the young rascal's legs.

"Get a move on, or I'll keep this up."

Packy danced around in pain, but could make no sound.

"Let's take the tar-kettle down and make him sit in it," said Micky with a wink.

The slate-picker only made the remark as a bluff, for he knew his companion would not adopt such a strenuous measure. It had the desired effect. Frightened lest Dick and Micky might dump him into the tar kettle, Packy started off toward the spot where the girls were waiting, his captors holding him by the arms so he couldn't run away.

He stopped frequently to resist, but a smart application of the switch caused him to go on again. As soon as they were near the engine-house and breaker, Micky, by Dick's orders, took the grass out of Packy's mouth, giving him free use of his tongue.

"I'll get square with yer, see if I don't!" he snarled, glaring at Darrell.

"I don't think you will. You've got another outrage to answer for, and I guess the justice will see that you are committed to the Blacton work-house for a year at least."

"If I go to the works my old man'll fix you."

"If he touches me he'll get in trouble himself."

"Yah! Yer only t'ink he will."

At that moment Martin Drake made his appearance from behind the breaker-house.

"Hello!" he said. "What you tied up that way for, Packy?"

"Cut me loose and kick the stuffin' out'r these fellers!" cried Packy, struggling to get away from Dick and Micky.

"Let him go!" said Drake, advancing to the relief of his pal's son.

"He's wanted by Constable Green," replied Dick doggedly, resolved not to release Packy if he could avoid doing so.

"He's a liar!" retorted the young ruffian. "I ain't wanted by nobody."

"He, his brother Jimmy and two other boys attacked Pansy Blossom and Micky here a while ago a mile down the river. They were about to tar and feather Grady when I interfered and saved him. I'm going to see that he's sent to the lock-up for it."

"You ain't goin' to let me be took to no lock-up, are yer, Martin?" asked Packy.

"I should say not. You're Bill's son, and I reckon it's my duty to stand up for you."

"You've no right to chip in, Martin Drake," protested Dick.

"I'll make it my right, then," grinned the miner in an ugly way.

"I'll report you to the justice if you let him loose."

"I reckon after I git through with you there won't be enough of you left to report me or anybody else," cried Drake, beginning to roll up his sleeves.

The two girls had stood aloof during the foregoing, watching the outcome with some apprehension. As the miner showed he intended to attack Darrell, Myrtle rushed between the two.

"Don't you dare hit Dick!" she cried with flashing eyes and heaving bosom. "If you do I'll have you arrested."

"Shut up, you vixen!" roared Drake, seizing and swinging her aside.

That was more than Dick could stand. He raised the switch he carried and brought it full across the miner's face. The man uttered a terrible howl. Almost blinded for the moment, he made a desperate rush at the boy, swinging his powerful fist in the air. Dick sprang nimbly aside and the blow took effect on Packy's head, knocking him senseless. At that moment there was the sound of wheels in the road and Constable Green drove up in his light wagon, which he stopped on seeing the rumpus before him.

CHAPTER VII.—Packy and the Gang Get What's Coming to Them.

Constable Green sprang out of his wagon, ran over and grabbed Drake by the arm. The miner, furious with pain and wrath against his young

aggressor, shook himself free and tried to get at Dick. Darrell easily avoided him, for the fellow could hardly see.

"Hold on, Martin Drake," said the constable sternly. "Why are you attacking Dick Darrell?"

"I'll kill him! He struck me with a stick in the face. He 'most blinded me."

"Well I won't allow you to hit the boy. A blow from your fist would probably injure him badly. I saw you hit Packy Sanders, and you've knocked him out."

"Me hit Packy!" cried Drake. "What would I do that for?"

"I don't know what you hit him for, but I saw you knock him down as I drove up."

"I didn't do nothin' of the kind," said the miner, evidently surprised at being charged with hitting his crony's son.

"I'm not going to argue the matter with you. There's the boy unconscious on the ground. His arms are tied, too. Do you know what the meaning of all this is, Dick?" asked the rather astonished officer.

"Yes, sir. Micky Grady and I captured Packy about a mile down the river and we were carrying him to your house, knowing that you wanted him, when Martin Drake interfered and wanted to set him free. When I objected to his butting in he started to attack me. Miss Blossom stepped between us. Drake grabbed her and swung her roughly aside. I got mad at that and struck him with this switch in the face. He then rushed at me, and trying to hit me smashed Packy in the head instead. That is the whole thing."

Drake heard Dick's explanation and woke up to the fact that he had hit Packy by mistake.

"Just you wait till I ketch you by yourself," he said, nodding darkly at Darrell. "I won't leave a whole bone in your body, you young monkey!"

"Look here, my man," said the constable sternly, "no threats against this boy. You had no right to interfere with him and Packy. I've got a warrant for the young rascal's arrest, and Dick knows it. Had you set him at liberty you would have had to reckon with me and the justice."

"I told him you were looking for Packy with a warrant," said Darrell.

"You'd better go your way, Drake," advised the officer. "If I hear about you attacking Dick Darrell at any time it won't be well for you."

Constable Green, who was a powerful man, released Drake and pushed him away. The miner glared sullenly at Dick, and then walked slowly off.

"Here, Dick," said the constable, "help me put this young ruffian into my wagon. I'll take him straight to the lock-up."

"We've got another charge to make against him," said Darrell.

"What is it?" asked the officer.

Dick explained the tar-and-feathering incident, and his statement was, of course, corroborated by Micky and Pansy.

"His brother Jimmy is getting to be as bad as he is. I'll have to take him and the other two chaps into custody, if I can lay my hands on them," said the constable.

Darrell assisted Constable Green to lift the unconscious Packy into his wagon, then the officer drove on toward the village and the two boys and

their girl companions followed leisurely. Next morning Packy was brought before Justice Robinson. Dick and Pansy were present to repeat their story of the incident on top of the culm-heap which ended in the girl falling into the river. There was a crowd, chiefly women, and among them the prisoner's father. Mrs. Sanders favored both Dick and Pansy with vindictive looks as they each told their story. She was about as tough as her husband, and was the terror of her neighbors. When the justice asked Packy what he had to say, and he hung his head, his mother came forward and declared that he was a good boy, only a little wild.

"Sure, he was only playin' wid the gal, your honor," she protested. "Isn't that so, Packy?"

"Yes," replied the boy. "I didn't mean not'in."

"There," cried the woman triumphantly. "Ye niver threw her in the river, did ye, Packy?"

"Naw. She fell in herself."

"Yer honor will let him go now," she said, as if there couldn't be any doubt of that.

Justice Robinson shook his head.

"Madame, this is only one of many complaints I've had against your son. If he wasn't guilty why did he run away as soon as he heard that Constable Green wanted him?"

"Sure, he didn't run away, your honor. It was me that sint him to Blackton on a matter of business. Didn't I, Packy?"

"Yes," answered the prisoner.

"I called twice at this woman's house after the boy," said the constable, rising, "and both times his mother told me that she didn't know where he was."

"What have you to say to that, Mrs. Sanders?" asked the justice.

Sure, I didn't think it was any business of the constable to ask where me b'y was. If I sint him to Blackton thot was me own business, not his."

"You may sit down, Mrs. Sanders. We have another complaint against your son dating from yesterday, and your other son, Jimmy, is also implicated."

"Me son Jimmy, is it? Wot's he done? Shure, he's only a babby."

Micky Grady, who was also present, was called to the witness chair and he detailed the tar-and-feathering outrage that would have been played upon him on the previous afternoon but for the opportune arrival on the scene of Darrell. His testimony was corroborated in whole by Pansy and in part by Dick.

"You ought to see that your son Packy is a thoroughly bad boy, Mrs. Sanders. Can you find any excuse for such conduct as that of gagging and tying an inoffensive little girl to a tree, and then preparing to cover the clothing of a thirteen-year-old boy with boiling tar which would have penetrated to his skin and burnt him seriously?"

"Sure, I don't belave me Packy intinded to do it," replied Mrs. Sanders. "Did you, Packy?"

"Naw. We was only jest foolin'."

"I tould yer he didn't mane nothin'," said she.

"The evidence shows that he did mean it. It's about time the young man was put where he will not have an opportunity to play such vicious tricks for some time to come. I will, therefore, commit him to the Blackton workhouse for the period of one year."

Packy scowled at the justice and then at Dick, Micky and Pansy, while his mother proceeded to make a scene. Constable Green seized the angry woman by the arm and bundled her out of the office into the street. Jimmy and Packy's two associates were then brought into the room by the constable's assistant. The result of their examination was that Jimmy was sentenced to a week's confinement in the lock-up, and the other two were sent to the workhouse at Blackton for three months. That ended the proceedings before the justice, and Dick, Micky, Pansy, and the spectators went their different ways, while the prisoners were removed to the lock-up.

CHAPTER VIII.—Trouble Ahead.

The special meeting to consider Martin Drake's case was called for Monday night. During the afternoon Dick found an opportunity to tell Murray, the engineer, what he had overheard Drake say to Bill Sanders at the tavern on Saturday night.

"I can't say that I'm much surprised, Dick," replied Murray. "Drake is a hard character, and Bill Sanders isn't much better. As for Hissop, Keating and Haley, they're all birds of a feather. You say Drake told Sanders that he couldn't prove anything in his own behalf."

"Yes," answered Dick.

"I take that as a practical admission that his cause is a bad one. That being the case he will receive no support tonight from the society."

"Then the company and the superintendent may look for trouble if Drake can persuade Sanders and the others to go into some scheme with him."

"Did he drop any hint of what scheme he had in view?"

"No. Sanders asked him about it, but he said he wouldn't make a move until after the meeting. If the society threw him down then there would be something doing."

"I think the matter looks serious enough for you to call at the superintendent's office and acquaint him with what you overheard," said the engineer.

"Shall I go now? Mr. Taylor leaves his office about half-past four, and sometimes earlier," said Dick.

"No. Wait till tomorrow. Let the society act first. As the vote will probably be against Drake he may betray himself to some extent in his anger. I will watch him closely during the evening, and after what you have told me I may be able to form an idea if he contemplates mischief on his own hook," said Murray.

There was a full house at the rooms of the Keystone Branch that evening, as all the miners were anxious to learn whether the society was likely to be drawn into an issue with the company.

Although Martin Drake was popular in a way with a large number of the members, because they liked to hear him speak against trusts, monopolies, and other industrial evils, as they reckoned them, still his ugly reputation had weakened his influence among the most steady and conservative miners. They distrusted him as a man, much as they admired his oratorical abil-

ity, and were impressed by his plausible reasoning and logic.

The committee that had waited on the superintendent presented its report. This put the case squarely up to Drake. He got up and made a speech in his own behalf, in which he exhausted every argument he could think of. His cronies followed, and strongly urged the society to make common cause with Drake.

Then the sober and disinterested members came to the fore and said that they failed to see one good reason why the society should get into hot water over Drake, as it seemed evident he had been discharged for cause, which took the matter entirely out of the hands of the union.

The question was finally put to a vote, and Drake lost by a large margin. He sprang to his feet in a rage.

"I consider it an outrage to be turned down in this way after all the money I've paid into the society for protection. You desert me in my hour of trouble like they say even the rats desert a sinkin' ship. All right, since I can't get justice through my own society I'll see whether I can get it some other way," he said significantly. "I was not built to crawl around on my knees and kiss the hand of a bloated task-master, let me tell you that. Those who choose to humble themselves in order to keep in the good graces of the super can do it. Taylor and his company will find out before they are many hours older that they made a mistake in refusing to take me back to work. That's all I've got to say."

His words created something of a sensation. The members wondered what he meant by saying that since he couldn't get justice from the society he'd try and get it some other way. Somebody moved that the meeting be adjourned, and in the confusion that ensued Drake and several of his closest friends disappeared.

Next day Martin Drake's family packed their possessions into a two-horse van and left the village, their destination presumably being Blackton. Drake himself left the key of the cottage at the company's office with word that he gave up possession voluntarily.

Sanders had been in a particularly ugly mood since Monday night, when he learned that his eldest son had been sent to the Blackton workhouse for one year, and his youngest to the village jail for a week. He blamed their hard luck on Dick Darrell and Micky Grady, and registered a threat against them both. He did not take the trouble to hunt up either of the boys to visit his anger on them, but solaced himself by putting in more time at the tavern, where he, Hissop, Haley and Keating met every night and talked and drank at a table apart from the rest of the habitués of the place.

Dick, who visited the sick miner again that week, saw them with their heads together, and wondered what they were talking about. The boy had his suspicions that there was something in the wind, but he was unable to catch a word they said, so he had no means of finding out whether their conversation was innocent or otherwise.

Sunday came around again, offering Dick and Myrtle another opportunity to walk out together in broad daylight. This time Micky and Pansy accompanied them at a short distance behind,

though, now that Packy and his associates were being taken care of, they had no fear of walking into trouble.

After supper Dick started for the outskirts of the village to visit one of his former associates who was still looking after coal cars in the mine. He spent a couple of hours with his friend and then left for home. He was walking along a retired and little frequented footpath, within a few hundred yards of the Keystone Coal Mining Company's office and other buildings used by the corporation, when he heard voices behind him. It was a calm, dark night, and the sounds came very clearly to his ears. The men who were talking were walking the same path behind him, and were likely to overtake him unless he walked faster. This was a matter that would not have concerned him but for one thing—the voice of one of the men sounded strangely like that of Martin Drake, and Drake was not supposed to be in the neighborhood any more. Drake had a clear, bell-like voice, different from the tones of any other miner of that village, and that fact had given him great advantage as a public speaker.

"If that isn't Drake's voice," muttered Dick, "then some stranger has come to the village who talks just like him. If it is Drake I wonder what he's doing here after severing his connection with the place?"

He soon heard Drake called by name, and that settled the question of his identity. Dick had little difficulty in recognizing the man who spoke to him by his voice. It was Bill Sanders. Darrel had no desire to meet either Sanders or Drake in that out-of-the-way spot at that time of night. He judged that it wouldn't be healthy for him. There were at least two other men with them, and the boy was at no loss to surmise who the other two were, for it was sure to be Hissop and Keating, or Haley. Dick was about to step out briskly, for the purpose of leaving the men as far behind as possible, when the idea flashed through his brain that the presence of Drake was rather significant of trouble.

"I guess it's my duty to try and find out if these fellows are up to mischief," he thought. "I'll just drop into that shed yonder, wait till they pass and then follow them. It's my opinion that Drake's threat was no idle one after all. He and his pals may be making up some plan to injure the company. If they are, I think it's up to me to look after the company's interests. That's what I would expect of an honest employee if I was the owner of this property."

The men's voices were gruff and aggressive, and the topic under discussion seemed to be no common one. As the men came closer Dick heard their words with some distinctness, and the purport of the talk was clearly aimed against the company, although he lost too many of the words to be able to understand just what they were talking about.

Darrel had to leave the path to reach the shed, and the men were close behind him when he did so. As he crouched down in the open doorway, watching for them to go by he was a bit disconcerted to see four figures emerge from the gloom and make straight for the shed, too. They came to a stop a yard from the door and stood gesticulating and talking earnestly together in a much lower tone.

"As it's early yet, and we don't want to be seen by the watchman, or anybody else, for that matter, we'd better finish our talk in this shed," said Drake.

Dick had only time to shrink back in a corner of the place before the men entered the shed.

CHAPTER IX.—The Unseen Watcher.

"What time will Keating join us?" asked Martin Drake.

"As soon as he kin get away from his house," replied Sanders. "I told you his wife is sick."

"Where did you tell him to meet us?"

"I told him to come to this shed; that we'd wait here for him."

"Well, we've got some hours ahead of us yet. He agreed to take a hand in our scheme, did he? Haley, you say, is laid up with a bad foot, and is out of it?"

"Yes. He smashed his toes in the tunnel yesterday and won't be able to get about for a week or two."

"That will leave four of us to watch while Jobson cracks the safe, and that's enough. I counted on five, but with Haley out of it the divvy will be so much more."

"Are you sure you kin get at the money?" asked Sanders. "It's in the safe, you know."

"You leave that part of the business to my friend Jobson. I didn't bring him over here to look on. He's a cracksman of the first water. He can go through a safe such as they have in the office like it was a piece of cheese. He's got the tools to operate with in that there bag. As there's two weeks' pay for the men lyin' in that safe, which is a pretty tidy sum of money, we ought to make a good haul, the five of us. Suspicion can't fall on you, Hissop, or Keatin' unless you git to spendin' your coin too freely, which you wouldn't be fool enough to do. As for Jobson and me, we'll be safe enough, don't you fear. This is where I combine revenge with a year's wages or more, and you chaps will be mighty well paid for a few hours' risk, which really amounts to nothin', since Hissop has got the watchman as drunk as blue blazes."

While the men were talking Dick had crept inch by inch over to the opposite corner of the shed, where an old box stood, behind which there was a vacant space that offered concealment for one person. As he coiled up in there, one of his shoes struck the end of the box. Sanders heard the slight noise and exclaimed:

"What's that?"

"What are you talkin' about?" asked Drake.

"I heard a noise at the back of this shed."

"Go outside, Hissop, and take a squint around."

Drake struck a match and looked around the place. He looked into the empty box, and was flashing the match behind it when it expired in his fingers. Dick, crouching down as low as he could, had given himself up as a gone goose. Drake caught a partial glimpse of the space behind the box as the match went out, and seeing nothing suspicious, did not look further.

"There's no one in here," he said, rejoining his companions.

"It's a mighty good thing there isn't," replied

Sanders in a significant tone. "It would be well for anybody to be caught here."

"That's right," nodded Drake. "If we caught a spy here he'd never live to give us away."

"I'm glad there wasn't anyone," said Jobson, "for I'm ag'in sheddin' blood. I don't want to get my neck in a halter for the sake of a few thousand dollars."

Here Hissop re-entered the shed.

"There ain't nobody outside," he said.

"You must have imagined you heard a noise," said Drake to Sanders.

"Mebbe I did. Or p'haps it was a rat."

Dick congratulated himself on having escaped detection. He judged from Drake's remarks that it would be as much as his life was worth to be caught spying on these men.

A light flashed up in the shed several times, and Dick guessed that one of the rascals was lighting his pipe. He was sure of it a moment later when the smell of tobacco-smoke was borne to his nostrils.

"Hist!" exclaimed Hissop at this point. "There's a couple of men comin' down the path. Lie low."

A dead silence succeeded his words. Dick heard the voices of two men, evidently miners, passing along the path a few yards in front of the shed.

If they looked in the direction of the shed they saw nothing to indicate that any one was in there, and so they passed on their way, and their voices finally died out in the distance.

The four men then resumed their talk, but it was on subjects not connected with the project on hand, and did not at all interest Dick. Another half hour passed away and Drake began to show signs of impatience.

"It's about time Keating showed up," he growled, peering out into the gloom.

"He'll be along presently," said Sanders.

Ten minutes more passed and then Hissop, who was watching by the door, called for silence again.

"I hear footsteps along the path," he said. "Mebbe that is Keating now."

The footsteps stopped now and a low, cautious whistle broke the silence of the night.

"That's him," said Sanders. "Go out and meet him, Hissop."

Hissop left the shed and in a few minutes returned with the fifth member of the party—the expected Keating.

"Hello, Keat! You've got here at last," said Drake. "We've been waitin' an hour for you."

"What's the diff! It ain't time yet for business. Not over half-past ten."

"Well, we wanted you here, so we'd be all together. How's your old woman?"

"She's better."

"Then there's nothin' to take your mind off the job?"

"Not a thing."

"Now that we're all here we'll go into the final details, and then we'll be ready to get busy."

"Say, fellers," said the new arrival, "I've been thinkin' it wouldn't be half a bad idea if we could throw suspicion on some chap who's known to be a bit disgruntled with the company."

"That's all right," replied Drake; "but who's to be the victim, and how are we goin' to implicate him?"

"There's one man right and proper who would all the bill."

"Who is he?"

"Who? Can't you guess?"

"No, blame me if I can," replied Drake impatiently.

"Why, that old soak, Ben Blossom," said Keating.

"Ben Blossom!" exclaimed Drake, Sanders and Hissop in a breath.

Dick's heart gave a bound against his ribs.

Ben Blossom was the father of Myrtle and Pansy. He was an inoffensive old man, who had gone to the dogs since his wife's death, three years since. While Mrs. Blossom was alive Ben was a sober and steady miner, and stood high in the company's books; but when his wife died of quick pneumonia he went all to pieces, like a stranded ship on a lee shore.

He took to drink, and became so unreliable that he was finally laid off from work. He was told that if he would pull himself together and be a man again he would be reinstated, but he never took advantage of the offer.

His children were allowed to keep the cottage at a reduced rent, which Dick helped to pay by going there to live.

Although Ben Blossom had no grouch against the company, lately his mind, weakened by drink, had become subject to hallucinations, and he imagined that the company was hounding him out of the village.

He began swearing that he would do something to get square. Nobody paid any attention to his vaporings, not even the superintendent, when his remarks were reported at the office.

That evening while watching beside his wife, Keating had suddenly thought of Ben Blossom's idle threats, and it occurred to him that they might be turned to the advantage of himself and his rascally associates in connection with the scoundrelly job they contemplated putting into execution that night.

He knew that Blossom on Sunday evenings went to the cottage of an old mate. As soon as he got away from attendance on his wife, Keating started off to waylay the old man on his road home. Keating had a flask of whisky with him, and as soon as Blossom came along the rascal hooked arms with him and offered him the bottle, telling him to drink heartily. Blossom didn't require a second invitation, and between drinking and talking Keating decoyed him to a bunch of bushes and kept him there till the old chap finished most of the bottle and rolled over in a drunken sleep.

Keating then took his jacket from him and came right on to the shed where he expected to meet his associate.

"Yes, Ben Blossom," repeated Keating, as the others looked at him. "Here's his jacket. I left him as drunk as a loon in a bunch of bushes not so far from here. We'll place his jacket so it's sure to be found after the explosion. As he's not likely to be home tonight, that of itself will look suspicious. When he's questioned about his movements since leavin' his pal's cottage he won't be able to give an intelligent answer, for he won't know himself where he went or what he did. Now, when things are in the flurry and excitement that'll come after this business, folks ain't goin' to be too dainty about their suspicions. The jacket will be first-class evidence that Blossom was around the office and other buildin's tonight."

Whether anythin' comes of it or not, things will look kind of black for him, considerin' the way he's lately been shootin' off his mouth."

Drake and the others listened attentively to Keating's scheme for involving the unfortunate Ben Blossom in the crime they were about to commit.

Dick was boiling over with indignation at the heartlessness of the trick to implicate poor old Ben Blossom in the robbery under way; but consoled himself with the reflection that he would put a spoke in the rascals' plans as soon as he could get away from the shed.

By the time the men had arranged the last details of their crooked work, Jobson, who sported a watch, announced that it was a quarter past eleven.

"Come on, then," said Drake. "No use wastin' any more time."

He stepped out of the shed and started for the scene of the contemplated crime, followed by the others.

CHAPTER X.—The Discovery Of Dick And What Followed.

When Martin Drake and his pals left the shed Dick came from his place of concealment and followed them cautiously. It was a dark night, as we have said, and the boy found some difficulty keeping them in sight, as he did not think it advisable to follow too close behind them. However, he knew they were bound for the company's office, which was not far from the shed in the direction of the village.

As he crept along Dick was figuring on the best course to pursue in order to secure the capture of the five rascals before they were able to carry out their plans for looting the office safe.

"Drake was pretty clever to enlist the services of a professional crook," he muttered, "since it would be impossible for them to break open the safe. It not only requires a skilled hand at the business, but proper tools to carry out such a job. The miners figure that they'll never be suspected of having any connection with the work, as they couldn't possibly do such a thing without experienced help. It's lucky for the company that I discovered the scheme and who are at the bottom of it. It's about a mile from the office to Constable Green's house. As soon as I see that the crook has got into the building I'll run into the village and notify the constable about what's going on. It ought to give the constable plenty of time to gather a posse, come out here and nab the whole bunch."

Having decided on his course of action, Dick followed the five men to their destination.

Hiding behind a coal car drawn up on the track, Dick watched the movements of the rascals. He saw them come to a stop not far from the office building and hold a brief consultation, then the four miners separated and started to hunt up the night watchman, who was supposed to be as drunk as a boiled owl.

At least Dick presumed that was their object, as well as to make sure that no one was around to discover what they were about. Jobson sat down on a boulder and waited, with his bag of tools in his hand. Dick waited patiently for the miners to return. In about ten minutes Sanders

reappeared and walked over to where the crook was sitting. Apparently the miner advised him that the coast was clear, for he started for the front door of the office. It didn't take him but a moment or two to force the door, enter the building and close the door behind him.

"The game is on," thought Dick; "now to carry the news to the constable."

He left the shelter of the car and started for the hedge under cover of which he expected to elude observation in case one of the rascally miners should happen to be looking in that direction at the moment. While he judged that the four miners were scouting around on the watch against an intruder, he did not suspect that one of them had crossed the tracks and taken up his post in the midst of the hedge. But this was exactly what Drake had done.

He found that he could get a fine view of the approaches to the office from that spot, and at the same time keep out of sight himself. His sharp eyes detected Dick the moment he left the shadow of the coal car.

"Who in thunder is that?" he muttered. "It's a spy or I don't know what I'm talkin' about. Well, I'll just cook his goose for him. I see he's comin' this way. Good! 'Walk into my parlor,' said the spider to the fly," he grinned.

Not suspecting that his presence had been discovered by one of the rascals, Dick reached the hedge, pushed his way into it and started to creep along behind it so that he could pass the office building without, as he hoped, being seen.

Drake was waiting for him to get near enough to pounce on.

"I'll fix the skunk, whoever he is," the miner snarled to himself. "Seems to be a boy. What in the mischief is he doin' around here at this hour of the night? Up to a bit of crooked work himself, maybe. Well, if he's been hidin' any time behind that car he's got onto us, and it won't do to let him get away."

At that moment Dick got within reach of the spot where Drake was hidden. The rascal rose up like a shadow and aimed a terrible blow at the boy's head. Had it taken effect as intended it might have killed Dick, for the miner's fist was like a sledge-hammer, but, luckily for Dick, he stumbled over some creepers at the moment and went down on all-fours. The blow spent its force in the air, and Drake, losing his balance, fell over him. Dick was staggered for an instant by the presence of the rascal, but quickly got on his legs and started to run. Drake, however, reached out and caught him by one of his ankles, and down went Dick again. He tried to kick himself loose, but Drake couldn't be shaken off.

"Come here, you young varmint!" cried the miner, dragging Darrell toward him. "What are you doin' around here, eh?"

"What's that to you?" asked Dick boldly.

"You'll find it's a whole lot to me. Come, now, you young varmint!" cried the miner, dragging Darrell toward him. "What are you doin' around here, eh?"

"What's that to you?" asked Dick boldly.

"You'll find it's a whole lot to me. Come, now, who are you? Speak up, or I'll smash you in the face."

Dick saw that Drake, whom he recognized by his voice, was bound to discover his identity in

a few moments whether he answered the question or not, so he said:

"I'm Dick Darrell, if you want to know very bad."

"Dick Darrell!" roared Drake, who, since the time the boy struck him in the face with the switch near the breaker-house, when the miner tried to set Packy Sanders free, had it in good and hard for the engineer's assistant. "So it's you, you young monkey, eh? I've a big bone to pick with you, and I guess I'll pick it now as well as any other time. You nearly blinded me the other mornin', you young villain, and I swore to git square with you for it. Before I fix you I want to know what you've been spyin' on. I fancy you know too much, anyway, for your own good. Get on your feet, blame you!" and Drake yanked him up.

Dick refused to gratify the miner's curiosity as to the reason why he was about that locality at a moment when his presence was particularly undesirable.

"So you won't speak? I'll see whether I kin make you speak or not," he said with grim ferociousness.

Holding on to Dick with one hand, he searched around for a stick to whale him with, but he failed to find anything suitable for his purpose. Drake then decided to drag the boy across the tracks and see what he could find on the other side. He did so, and was met by Hissop.

"Who have you there?" asked the other miner.

"A young spy," gritted Drake. "Dick Darrell, who helps Murray at the engine-house. I caught him watchin' behind that car yonder, so I reckon he's too wise to be allowed to go free."

"Why did you bring him here? Why didn't you knock him out with a chunk of coal? He's identified you, and me, too, for that matter. That makes a pretty kettle of fish. No matter what we may do to him, he'll blow the gaff on us tomorrow mornin' when the job has been discovered."

"He'll blow no gaff!" hissed Drake. "I'll kill him first!"

"No," replied Hissop, "there's to be no blood spillin'. I'm not goin' to put a noose around my neck for the sake of a few hundred dollars."

"That so?" sneered Drake. "If he ain't put out of the way how are we goin' to save ourselves from bein' took up for the robbery, eh? Answer me that, Tom Hissop."

The other rascal saw that they were in a bad quandary. The two, with Dick between them, were standing near the office building. Just then a heavy, dull report reached their ears from inside the office. Both knew what that meant—that Jobson had blown open the safe. Dick also knew the meaning of the sound. With a sudden lunge he wrenched his arm out of Drake's grip and fled away into the darkness.

"After him!" roared Drake.

Dick didn't get far before he was headed off by Sanders, and partly surrounded by the three rascals it was a case of dodge this way and that to escape them. The noise made by the efforts of the miners to catch Dick brought Keating on the scene, and Dick found himself in a tight fix. At that moment Jobson came out of the doorway of the office with the money-box in his hand. He instantly divined from the excitement that something had happened. Seeing that his associates

in guilt were busily engaged trying to capture some intruder, his sharp mind suggested that here was a chance for himself that ought not to be neglected. He had the money-box containing two weeks' pay of the company's employees in his hands. Why not sneak off with it in the confusion and darkness, and let his pals whistle for their share? The principle of honor among thieves was not very strongly developed in Jobson's character. He went rather on the idea of everyone for himself and the Old Boy for all. The crook didn't dwell long over his decision. He sneaked around the opposite side of the building, and disappeared into the gloom of the night.

CHAPTER XI.—In Which Dick Eludes His Enemies.

In the meantime Dick, finding himself in a trap, saw that his only chance was in assuming an aggressive attitude. This thought was put in his head by seeing a pile of coal close by. He judged that he might look for little mercy at the hands of the rascals if they got him into their clutches again. He suddenly stopped near the coal-heap, snatched up several pieces and began throwing them at the rascals in quick succession. His aim was pretty accurate, and the four rascals had a lively time trying to avoid the hard missiles. Drake received two nasty cuts in the face, while Sanders suffered from a similar cut over the ear that made them both wary for the time being of coming in closer contact with the nervy boy.

"Blame you, Darrell!" cried Drake at length, furious over the wounds he had received. "We'll fix you in a minute or two."

Dick's answer was a lump of coal that caught the rascal over the eye and drew more blood. That was the last straw with the miner. With a roar like a mad bull, and bending down his head, he dashed straight at the boy, determined to bring matters to an issue. Dick saw that he meant business, and taking advantage of the opening in the circle of his enemies, he darted through in a direction away from the village. The four gave instant chase, but Dick outstripped them and disappeared in the darkness. After a fruitless pursuit the rascals stopped and came together to consult.

"This is a fine hole we're in now, Drake," snarled Keating. "The boy will give us away as sure as thunder, and we'll be pulled in the mornin'."

"What's the use of howlin' over spilled milk?" growled Drake. "Who expected that we'd be up agin that kid?"

"Blast the luck!" gritted Hissop. "We'll have to skip from the village as soon as we've divided the swag. What's my family to do without me?"

"And who's goin' to look after my sick wife and two kids?" roared Keating. "I wish I'd never gone into your blamed scheme, Martin Drake."

"Stop your yawpin' and listen to me. All isn't lost yet. I know what that boy'll do. He'll make straight for Constable Green's house, wake the old man up and tell his story. Well, he must be headed off."

"How kin he be headed off now?" asked Hissop.

"Easily. We chased him away from the village. He'll have to work around some distance to get

there. You and Keatin' must start direct for the constable's. You know where he lives. You kin hustle straight there and beat the boy by a mile. Then lie in wait for him. As soon as he shows up put him out of business. If you're too squeamish to do the trick out and out, tap him on the head to make him quiet and then bring him back with you to the hut where me, Sanders and Jobson'll be waitin' for you. Now, scoot, for you ain't got no time to spare."

The others thought Drake's suggestion good, and the best thing that could be done under the circumstances. Accordingly, Hissop and Keating started for the village at a rapid pace, making for the house occupied by Constable Green, where the rascals expected the boy would go first in order to put the machinery of the law on their track. Drake and Sanders hurried back to the office, under the impression that Jobson had got into the safe by that time and was watching for them with the money-box. On entering the office they found that the crook had finished his work in good shape, for the safe door had been blown open and the money-box was missing. Jobson was also missing, too, and though they looked all around for him he was not to be found.

"Where in thunder is he?" asked Sanders with an imprecation.

"Blest if I can tell you," replied Drake, scratching his head. "He ought to have waited here for us. I guess he must have gone over to the shed where we arranged to divide the swag."

"Then come over to the shed at once. I want to see the color of that money."

So they went to the shed at once. It was silent and deserted, just as they had left it. There wasn't a sign of Jobson. Then the two rascals looked at each other, with rage and fear forming in their minds, for the same thought had suddenly occurred to each.

"Do you s'pose he's taken advantage of the chance to skip with the money?" demanded Sanders with an imprecation.

"I should hope not," replied Drake, a bit doubtfully, for he recognized that a box containing two weeks' pay of the miners was a strong temptation to a professional law-breaker.

"You should hope not!" roared Sanders. "You brought that man here and we hold you responsible for him, d'ye understand?" he added in a furious tone. "Suppose he's dusted with the boodle, where do we come in, eh? What do we get for all the risk we've run tonight? And how are we to know that this is not a put-up job between him and you to bag the money between yourselves and leave us to whistle for our shares? Answer me that, Martin Drake."

"A put-up job!" snarled the other rascal. "You ought to know me better than to suspect me of such a thing."

"You can't know what's in a man till he's found out," retorted Sanders. "You've moved out of the village, bag and baggage. You say you're livin' in Blackton. How do we know yer are? The moment we lost sight of yer we may never see yer ag'in. You could meet this pal of yours, divvy up the money between yer two selves and then skip out to parts unknown. The more I look at this thing the more I fancy you've been intendin' to act crooked all along. Why ain't yer pal here with the box?"

"I don't know why he isn't here. He ought——"

"Ought to be jiggered!" cried Sanders, who had worked himself into a furious pitch of temper. "I say yer intend to play us false."

"And I say you're a liar, Bill Sanders!" angrily.

The word had scarcely passed his mouth before Sanders sprang at him like a tiger, and in a moment the two men were engaged in a desperate fight.

CHAPTER XII.—The Capture of Dick Darrell and His Escape.

As soon as Dick had eluded his pursuers he started to reach the village by making a wide detour. Drake had made no mistake in judging that the boy's objective point would be Constable Green's house. That was just where he intended to go. He meant to arouse the officer and make him wise to the state of affairs. He hurried along as fast as he could go, but as he had twice as far to go as Hissop and Keating had to intercept him, they reached the vicinity of the constable's home a few minutes before Dick hove in sight.

"Here he comes now," said Hissop, nudging his companion. "We made no mistake in comin' here. Drake is a pretty wise old owl. We must knock him out with a blow and then carry him back to the shed. We've got to be careful that he doesn't make any outcry, for that might spoil everythin'."

"That's right," nodded Keating. "Our safety depends on nailin' him right off the reel. It's mighty lucky for us that we're pretty sure of catchin' him at last. I wonder how in thunder he came to get on to us at the office? He ought to have been home in bed hours ago. I wouldn't be surprised if he was hangin' around the shed when we were there tryin' to find out what we were up to."

"By jingo! You may be right about that. Sanders heard a noise at the back of the shed before you came and I went out to investigate. I didn't see anyone, but Darrell could have been lying in the bushes, and I wouldn't have seen him because it is so dark."

"You kin depend on it he's been spyin' on us for some time, the blamed young imp! Well, we'll pickle him in a minute or two."

Dick came on without the least suspicion that the two rascals were lying in wait ready to pounce upon him. As he passed close to a big shade tree near the constable's house, Hissop and Keating sprang upon him and bore him to the ground. Hissop struck him a heavy blow on the head with his powerful fist and Dick's wits went wool-gathering. Perceiving that the boy lay quite still, they looked at him to make sure that he wasn't shamming.

"He's as safe as a trivet," said Keating. "That fist of yours settled him for a while. Now we'll carry him back to the shed."

Keating took hold of his head and shoulders, and Hissop grabbed up his legs. In this way they retraced their steps to the rendezvous. When they arrived at the shed they were surprised to see no signs of their associates in guilt.

"They must be inside waitin' for us," said Keating.

Just then Hissop, who was in advance, stumbled over something soft and yielding.

"What the dickens is this?" he exclaimed, dropping the boy's legs.

"What's the mater?" asked Keating, surprised at his companion's exclamation.

Hissop stooped down and saw the form of a man in his path. Looking closer he saw that it was Sanders, with his face covered with blood.

"Thunderation!" he ejaculated. "There's somethin' wrong."

"Somethin' wrong! What do you mean?" asked Keating.

"This is Sanders, bleedin' like a pig. I ain't sure but he's dead."

"Sanders dead!" cried Keating, dropping Dick on the grass and stepping forward.

"No, he isn't dead. I kin feel his heart beat. He's badly knocked out, though. Somethin' has happened to him. Lucky that I have some of that whisky left I treated old Blossom to. Look in the shed, but I don't believe you'll find Drake nor his friend the crook. This is blamed funny. Sanders' face is almost battered out of shape. There's been some crooked work here, or my name's not Hissop."

Keating struck a match and flashed it in the shed, but saw no signs of either Drake or Jobson.

"You'd better go to the brook yonder, Keat, and fetch some water in your hat; but first help me carry Sanders into the hut."

Keating lent a hand and then suggested that they should bring the boy inside, too, lest he recover and give them the slip. So they carried Dick in and laid him down at one side. Keating then went for the water, while Hissop poured some of the whisky down the insensible man's throat. Sanders was coming to when Keating returned. Hissop washed the blood from their associate's face, and discovered a nasty wound above his temple. At last Sanders opened his eyes and Hissop gave him the balance of the whisky, which completed his recovery.

"What in creation happened to you, Bill?" asked Hissop. "And where are Drake and Jobson?"

"Confound 'em both!" cried Sanders violently, as he struggled to get up and failed from weakness. "They've done us!"

"Done us! What do you mean?" demanded Hissop in surprise.

"I mean that crook has skipped with the money and Drake is hand and glove with him in the trick."

"Is that a fact?" roared Hissop, while Keating gave a gasp of rage.

"Yes, it is a fact, though Drake denied it. But I know it's a put-up job to leave us in the lurch."

At that interesting moment Dick Darrell sat up in the darkness of the shed. He had recovered his senses a few minutes since and heard the excited converse of the rascals. He listened to the row they were now putting up.

"What makes you so sure of it, Bill?" asked Hissop, quivering with disappointment and anger.

Sanders gave his personal reasons.

"How came you to be hurt?"

"Me and Drake had it out about the matter, and when he saw I was gettin' the best of him he picked up a stone and struck me in the head with it. That's all I remember till now."

Hissop and Keating were inclined to take Sanders' view of Drake's treachery, and they cursed their old pal roundly.

"What are we goin' to do?" asked Keating.

"Blamed if I know what we're goin' to do," said Hissop. "The scoundrel, after gettin' us into this pickle, has left us to face the music. I'm afraid we're in this up to our necks, and will be sent to prison, while that skunk and his crooked pal will get clear off with the money."

"What about the boy Darrell?" asked Sanders.

"We caught him in front of the constable's house and brought him here."

"Where is he?"

"Lyin' over yonder. I knocked the senses out of him with a blow of my fist," said Hissop.

"We must try and square things with him somehow," said Sanders. "If we can't our name is mud all around. That hound Drake and his pal has the money and we have nothin' but the chance of goin' to prison."

The men swore roundly at the recreant miner, as they considered him. Taking advantage of the darkness, and the fact that the men were off their guard, Dick Darrell edged his way toward the doorway.

"Strike a match and take a look at the kid," said Sanders.

At those words Dick knew he must make a dash for liberty at once if he was to escape the rascals, consequently he rose to his feet and, as the match flared up, sprang for the door, tripping over Keating in his haste.

"Stop him! He's gettin' away!" ejaculated Sanders.

Keating and Hissop made a simultaneous jump for Dick, and would have caught him, only they came together at the entrance and thus blocked each other. When they got outside of the shed Dick had the advantage of several yards' start. The two miners proved to be such good runners that Dick couldn't shake them off. He had started in the direction opposite the village, and finding that he was too closely pressed to work around, he kept straight on down the valley. Keating and Hissop were determined that he should not escape them, and as the sky had cleared considerably there was light enough for them to easily keep him in sight. Dick led them a long race, but they clung to his track with the tenacity of bulldogs, since they felt that if he managed to get away from them they would have to face the music for the part they had played in the robbery of the office safe, notwithstanding that they had not benefited a single penny by the crime.

The pace had at first been a hot one, but it soon dropped as the pursued and pursuers gave in to the strain of the ordeal. Finally Dick reached the end of the Keystone property and sprang over the fence of an old and dilapidated farm, which the Keystone Company and other mining interests had tried to buy at different times on the supposition that there must be coal on the land, as it was found everywhere else in the valley. Hissop and Keating followed him, but the ground being well wooded, they lost sight of him pretty soon, and finally woke up to the fact that he had at last succeeded in giving them the slip. They knocked around for half an hour in a futile attempt to find him, and then threw up their hands. Luck was against them, and the only thing they could do for their own safety was to return home, get a few things and skip out for Blackton. As for Bill Sanders, they argued that he would have to shift for himself.

Dick in the meanwhile kept on leisurely toward the old farmhouse, where he saw a light in two of the lower windows. The owner of the farm, whose name was Jason Clark, was something of a hermit, and lived there all by himself. It was said that he had not a single relative in the world to leave the property to, a property that might prove immensely valuable in coal deposits. The chances were, therefore, that at his death, unless he willed it to charity, it would revert to the State. Dick, seeing the light in the windows on the ground floor, wondered if the old man got up so early in the morning, for he figured that it must be about three o'clock. He approached one of the windows and looked into the plainly furnished sitting-room. What he saw made him gasp. The old hermit was bound to a chair in the centre of the room, and gagged with a handkerchief, while over in one of the corners Martin Drake was rifling an old-fashioned escritoire, or writing-desk and book-case combined.

CHAPTER XIII—Dick Saves the Old Hermit.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Dick. "What a rascal Drake is! Not satisfied with swindling his associates out of their share of the money stolen from the company's office, he must add the robbery of this old man to his evil deeds. I wonder where his companion, the crook, is? Upstairs, I suppose, hunting for loot. I'd like to capture Drake. He's the ringleader of the robbery. If I was sure he was alone I'd take a chance; but I wouldn't stand much show against the two of them."

Dick, judging from what he had heard Sanders say at the hut, supposed that Drake and Jobson were hand-in-glove, and that where one was the other would also be somewhere around. The reader, however, knows that, bad as Drake was, he was not guilty of treachery toward his associates—that Jobson alone had sneaked with the money-box and left Drake in the lurch as well as the others. Dick watched Drake's impatient search for spoil, and occasionally glanced at the helpless old man as he squirmed about in his chair. The rascally miner, after searching every nook and corner of the escritoire, scattered books and papers about on the carpet, and dumping out the contents of every drawer, which he hastily pawed over, left the old piece of furniture with nothing to reward him for the time he had wasted on it.

His bunged-up face looked as dark as a thunder-gust. He was mad over the lack of results. He walked straight to the old man, and shaking his hairy fist in his wrinkled countenance, said something to him that Dick couldn't hear. His action, however, spoke for itself. He was threatening the old hermit—trying, no doubt, to intimidate him into telling where his money and valuables were hidden, for everybody in the valley had the idea that Jason Clark was something of a miser, and loved money simply for money's sake. Drake partially removed the handkerchief from the hermit's mouth so that he could answer, but the old man refused to talk with him. The miner grew furious over Clark's obstinacy and raised his fist as if it was his intention to smash the hermit in the face. Then he changed his mind as

if some idea had struck him. There was a heavy stool near by. Drake drew this forward, and taking the cover from the table tore it into long strips.

"What's he up to now?" wondered Dick.

The watcher wasn't kept long in ignorance of Drake's fiendish intention. The rascal removed the old man's shoes and socks and then bound his legs tightly to the stool. The red embers of a fire were burning in the old-fashioned open fireplace. Drake walked out of the room, and in a few minutes returned with an armful of fuel. With this he fed the fire into a lively blaze. When he had it well started he pulled the hermit out of his chair and laid him down on the carpet. This left his feet up on the stool. Then the rascal deliberately dragged the stool close up to the fireplace so that the old man's bare soles would be presented to the heat of the fire.

Dick saw, with a thrill of horror, that Drake intended to subject Jason Clark to that old-fashioned torture—the fire test. This was one of the refined cruelties practiced by the Spanish conqueror, Cortez, on the head men of the Aztec race to compel them to disclose the hiding-places of Montezuma's buried treasures which the Spanish invader coveted. As the heat began to blister the old man's soles he writhed about on the floor and tried to draw his feet with the stool away. Drake prevented him doing this by bracing one of his muscular legs against the stool.

"I can't stand by and see this going on," cried Dick to himself in great indignation. "I don't care what the consequences may be, I'm going to interfere."

A scream of pain from Jason Clark hastened action on the boy's part.

"If Drake and his pal could get into the house I can. Probably the crook forced one of the back doors, and no doubt I can enter that way. I must get a club to defend myself before I face the music."

Thus speaking, Dick looked around and soon spied a stout piece of wood that made an excellent cudgel. Armed with this he made for the back of the house. He found the door opening on the kitchen was slightly ajar. Through this he made his entrance and felt his way in the darkness to a door. This let him into a hallway, and the old man's screams came clearly to his ears and spurred him on to action. Slipping toward a door that, from the sounds within, he believed to be the room where the tragedy was going on, he opened it and dashed into the apartment. Drake saw him and sprang up with an exclamation of surprise and rage, thus giving the old man a chance to pull the stool away from the fire, and terminate the acute part of the torture he was undergoing.

Dick gave the rascal no time to think, but attacked him with the club so vigorously that Drake was thrown into confusion and gave ground. The boy, with blazing eyes, followed him, and Drake took refuge on the opposite side of the table. The room was lighted by a candle stuck in a heavy, ancient metal candlestick which stood on the table. Quick as a flash Dick seized the candlestick and flung it into the rascal's face. The fellow threw up his hands, but not quick enough to avoid getting a stunning blow on the forehead. He uttered a roar of pain and a string of imprecations that the boy cut short by springing

...and at him and stretching him senseless on the floor with a swing of his stick. The candle had been snuffed out and the room was now illuminated only by the fire.

The old hermit lay groaning piteously on the carpet, his soles being all blistered from the heat to which they had been subjected. Dick stood over Drake until he was sure that the rascal was knocked out, and then he listened for the coming of the crook, whom he supposed to be in the house, and who he thought would be attracted by the uproar. Not a sound from any other part of the house reached his ears. Then it occurred to him to ask the old man if there was anyone else in the building. Picking up the candle and candlestick he lighted the former at the fire and replaced it in its socket in the latter. Getting out his jack-knife he went to Jason Clark and quickly released him, helping the groaning victim back into his easy chair. The poor old fellow stared helplessly at him.

"Is there another man in the house?" asked Dick.

The hermit shook his head.

"Then this rascal attacked you alone?"

The old man nodded feebly. Dick dragged the unconscious miner around so that Jason Clark could see that his persecutor was out of business, and then proceeded to tie the scoundrel hand and foot with the strips of table-cloth the rascal had used on the hermit. When he had accomplished this he turned to the pain-racked hermit.

"Have you any butter in the house?" he asked.

"Yes, in the kitchen cupboard," groaned the old man.

The boy hurried out to the kitchen, found the cupboard and discovered a small quantity of butter in a cracked bowl. He rushed back with it to the sitting-room and started in to apply it to the hermit's blistered feet. This simple method gave the old man immediate relief, though it did not take all the pain away at once. When Dick had used up all the butter he asked Jason Clark how he felt.

"Much better," he whispered feebly, with a look of gratitude. "Who are you, young man?"

Dick told him his name and where he worked.

"I shall never forget that you saved me from a terrible torture," said the hermit. "He wanted to force me to tell him where my money was hidden. But I haven't any money. I'm a poor old man. Very poor and lonely. Very poor and lonely," he repeated. "You saved my life for a little while. I don't want to die yet. No, no, not yet. I'm very poor, but I don't want to die. It's a terrible thing to be laid away deep in the cold ground, where I'd never be able to see my gold any more. No, no, I don't mean that. My mind wanders. I haven't any gold, boy, not a single shining coin; but I dream that I have. I dream that I have. And it's a pleasant dream to take it out, and count it over and over, and feel it slipping through my fingers. It is pleasant music to my old ears to hear it jingle and clink, jingle and clink!"

His old leaden eyes lighted up with a sort of ecstasy, and his fingers worked as if he were handling the gold he raved about.

"His mind is wandering," thought Dick as he looked at him.

The light suddenly faded from the hermit's eyes and he looked furtively at the boy.

"What was I saying?" he asked eagerly.

"You were speaking about counting gold and hearing it jingle," replied Dick.

"I was dreaming, only dreaming," said the old man feverishly. "I haven't any gold—not a single coin. You won't tell anybody that I have, will you? They'd come here like that man and try to rob, perhaps murder me. The world is very bad. I have found it so. That's why I live by myself. That's why——"

He stopped and looked at Dick.

"Can I do anything more for you, Mr. Clark?" asked the boy.

"No, no; you have done more for me now than anyone else would. I shan't forget you, boy. I shan't forget you. You've saved my life for a little while—a little while, and I won't forget you. Some day, when I'm dead——"

He paused as if the thought was repugnant to him.

"We've all got to die some time," he muttered. "Why not I? And I'm old, too. I can't live much longer—not much longer. Boy, will you come and see me once in a while? You shan't forget it. I will——"

"Sure, I'll come if you wish me to," replied Dick heartily. "I'll come over after I'm through work tomorrow—or rather tonight, for I see that it is four o'clock in the morning now."

The little clock on the mantel struck that hour while he was speaking.

"How came you to be around here at this hour?" asked the hermit curiously.

"I'll tell you when I see you again. It would be too long a story to go over now. I haven't been to bed tonight, and don't expect to go there till tonight. Can I help you to your bed?"

"No, no; I'll sleep here in my chair. I often do that. Can you drag this man outside? I don't want him in here. And see that he cannot come back to attack me after you are gone."

"I'll look after him. Have you any rope about the house?"

"There is a rope in the barn. The door is not locked."

"Well, good-night, Mr. Clark. I'll see you to-night."

"Good-night, boy. You have done a good thing for yourself. You will find that I am grateful. I'll make you rich—yes, yes, very rich, very rich. I can't take my money with me, so you shall have it; but, remember, not a word, boy—not a word. This is between you and me. You and me—remember!"

"He's nutty," thought Dick. "That torture has set his mind off its trolley."

He stooped, grabbed hold of the unconscious Drake and dragged him from the room and the house. Carrying him over to the barn Dick got into the building without any difficulty. He found plenty of rope hanging around. Yanking the rascal up against one of the posts Dick tied him so carefully that it was clearly impossible for him to get free through his own exertions. Then closing the door, he started back for his own village.

CHAPTER XIV.—In Which Dick Recovers the Stolen Money-Box.

Dick kept a sharp lookout as he went along for Keating and Hissop, lest those two rascals be

prowling around the neighborhood still thinking to catch him.

"I wonder where that crook is?" he asked himself. "If he was in with Drake it's a wonder the pair wasn't together. Maybe they divided the money and separated. What a fool I was not to search the rascal; but such a thing quite slipped my mind. If he had half of the stolen funds of the company, which would be a big sum, it's a wonder he would stop and take chances trying to rob Jason Clark."

Drake's actions seemed decidedly odd to Dick in the light of preceding circumstances.

"I should think he would have got away from the neighborhood as soon as he could. He ruined himself by attacking the hermit, for I've got him fixed so he will stay where he is till Constable Green goes to arrest him. Some men do foolish things at the wrong time, and that's the case with Drake. If he doesn't get fifteen or twenty years for this night's work I guess he'll be uncommonly lucky."

Dick reached the fence that enclosed the old hermit's property and was about to climb over it when his sharp eyes caught the flash of a match through the bushes.

"Hello!" muttered the boy, coming to a stop. "Somebody is lighting a pipe."

His first idea was that he had almost floundered on either Keating or Hissop. Being a nervy boy, he didn't like to sneak away until he had made sure it was one of those rascals or not. So he crawled up to the fence and looked through.

Just then the person on the other side struck a second match and the glow revealed his face to Dick. It was neither Keating nor Hissop, but Jobson, the crook, and on the ground beside him lay the company's money-box.

"I wonder how I'm goin' to git out of this blamed valley before daylight?" he heard the rascal mutter. "Here I've been walkin' for hours and I haven't any idea where I'm at. I've been tryin' to avoid them coal mines, but there seems to be one at every turn, and on the other side is the river. I'd give \$500 for a boat at this minute. If I could get across the river I'd be safe. I'd sooner face a detective than one of my late pals. I'll bet they're lookin' for me and their share of the money I copped."

Dick heard the fellow chuckle to himself.

"When they found I had lit out with the money-box I'll bet they were hoppin' mad, and they hain't got on to my trail yet. I must steer clear of Drake after this. He wouldn't try to do a thing to me. I'll bet the whole bunch will be pinched for the work that I did, for that kid they chased will give 'em away. He can't give me away 'cause he doesn't know me. Nobody knows me around these diggin's. What's bad for me is that I don't know the blamed neighborhood myself. If I did I should have been at Blackton by this time. I don't see how I came to miss the railroad tracks, but I did. That's why I'm in such a fix."

The rascal got up, walked a few feet away and stood looking to the right and then to the left, as if trying to figure out in which direction he ought to continue his journey. Instantly the temptation came to Dick to try and get hold of the money-box.

The very idea of depriving the fellow of his booty right under his nose sent a thrill of ex-

citement through the boy's blood. It lay within reach, a couple of feet on the other side of the fence. If the trick was to be pulled off at all it had to be worked quickly. Dick therefore, didn't lose any time considering the chances, but pushing his head and shoulders through the opening between the middle and bottom fence rails he seized the box and pulled it softly toward him. Inside of half a minute he had it in his possession.

"Now to get away. If I can hand this over to the constable I'll have done a pretty good night's work," he said to himself as he crawled away from the fence and started to get out of the hermit's property at some other point.

In order to do this and avoid the probability of meeting the crook, who would naturally be in a pretty bad humor over the mysterious disappearance of the money-box, he made a wide detour of the farm and finally got over the fence half a mile from the spot where he had captured the box. Then he started for the village by as direct a course as possible. It was half-past five and daylight when Dick pounded on the constable's door. The officer poked his head out of an upper window and asked who was there.

"Dick Darrell. I want to see you right away."

"What's the trouble?" asked the constable, surprised at the boy's early visit.

"The coal company's office has been broken into early this morning and the safe looted," replied Joe.

"The dickens you say!" gasped Mr. Green. "I'll dress myself and be down in a minute."

A minute meant about five, at the end of which interval the officer opened the door and invited the boy to enter.

"Come into your sitting-room and I'll tell you what I've been through since nine o'clock last night," said Dick.

"But this robbery you spoke of?"

"Is part of my story."

Dick then began at the beginning and told his story straight through to the point where he recaptured the stolen money-box from the crook.

The constable punctuated his narrative several times with exclamations of astonishment, and when Dick finally finished, and picked up the cash-box and offered it to him, he could not repress very decided expressions of admiration for Darrell's plucky work which had saved the company many thousands of dollars.

"This will be the making of you, Dick," said Mr. Green, slapping him on the back. "The company will not fail to recognize your services with a very substantial reward."

"I'm not looking for a reward. I'm satisfied to know that I've done my full duty to the people who employ me."

"That sentiment does you credit, my lad, but the company will take care of you just the same. We will go right over to the superintendent's house now. The wheels of justice must be set in motion without delay in order to catch those rascals. After we have had our interview with Mr. Taylor I'll drive over to the Clark farm and take Martin Drake into custody. I judge from the way you tied him in the barn that he's safe to stay there until I get there."

"He's safe enough," replied Dick, with a nod of his head.

No time was lost in going over to Mr. Taylor's

residence, which was the most pretentious house in the neighborhood. He was not up, but the cook, who admitted the visitors, went to his room and aroused him, telling him that Constable Green wanted to see him at once on business of the utmost importance.

He came downstairs in ten minutes and met his callers in the dining-room.

"This is an early call, Mr. Green," he said, glancing casually at Dick, whom he recognized as the engineer's assistant. "You say you called on business of—"

"Great importance, sir. I have just been informed by this boy that the office building was broken into during the night, the safe cracked and the box containing the men's pay carried off."

"Great Scott! You don't mean that!" cried the superintendent, visibly startled.

"It seems to be a fact, sir; but you need not be alarmed about the money, for Darrell, after a night of thrilling adventure, succeeded in recovering the stolen money-box and capturing the ringleader of the enterprise."

"Is it possible!" cried Mr. Taylor, looking at Dick in surprise.

"Yes, sir," put in Dick, "and here is the box to prove it."

He placed the cash-box on the table before the superintendent. Mr. Taylor recognized it at once, and could no longer doubt the fact as stated.

"Let me hear your story, my lad," he said.

Dick at once told him the same story he had previously related to Mr. Green.

"Upon my word, you're a most unusual boy," said the superintendent, "and I cannot too highly compliment the courage and sagacity you have displayed in our interest. When this matter has been laid before the company I can assure you that your conduct will be fully appreciated and suitably recognized. You say that you left Martin Drake tied up securely in the barn on the Clark farm?"

"Yes, sir," replied Dick.

"He must be taken charge of at once," said Mr. Taylor, turning to the constable.

"I will attend to him right away," replied the officer.

"Very good. That crook, whose name you say is Jobson," looking at Dick, "ought to be captured before he can get a great way from the valley. You'd better send your assistant after him, Mr. Green."

"I will," said the constable.

"As for Hissop, Keating and Sanders, I presume they have already left the village in order to avoid arrest. I will telephone the Blackton authorities to look out for them. Now, my boy, you had better go home and go to bed. I will see that your place is filled for the day. You certainly are not in shape to go to work after the strenuous night you have put in for the company, nor would it be fair to expect you to do anything more for the present. Report at my office this afternoon about three, as I wish to see you further about this affair."

"Very well, sir," answered Dick, who was then excused and started for home, where on his arrival he was greeted by Myrtle with an exclamation of joy.

"Where have you been all night, Dick?" she asked. "I've been greatly worried about you. I

didn't sleep a bit thinking that something dreadful had happened to you."

"Do you really think so much of me as that?" he asked laughingly.

"You know I think as much of you as though you were my brother," she replied earnestly.

"And I think more of you than if you were my sister," he replied.

Myrtle blushed and then smiled.

"Do tell me where you've been. Father has been out nearly all night, too. He came in about two hours ago and went right to bed. He's been drinking heavily again," she said with a sigh and a tearful look.

"It wasn't his fault altogether."

"How do you know that?" she asked in surprise.

"You will learn as I tell my story," replied Dick, who then explained for the third time all that he had gone through during the night.

To say that Myrtle was astonished would express her feelings but mildly. But more than all she was very happy to know that Dick had turned up safe and sound, for the boy occupied a very large share of her heart, whether he guessed that fact or not.

CHAPTER XV.—Martin Drake and His Pals Receive the Full Penalty.

Constable Green on his arrival at Jason Clark's farm found Drake exactly as Dick had left him, except that he was now conscious. The constable went in and had a talk with the old hermit, and the recluse's story tallied exactly in every particular with Dick Darrell's. The old man was feeling better after the hard experience he had been through, but it was easy to see that he was gradually failing in health from the infirmities of age, and had not a very long lease on life.

He couldn't praise Dick too much to the constable, and asked the officer many questions about the plucky boy, in whom he showed unusual interest. The constable carried Drake back to the village and locked him up in one of the strong-rooms attached to his house, from which at the same time he released Jimmy Sanders, whose time was about up. Early that afternoon Sanders was arrested in Wilkes-Barre boarding a train for Philadelphia and was brought to the village and locked up in the room adjoining the cell in which Drake was confined.

Lines were out for Hissop and Keating, but they were not seen anywhere. Mr. Green's deputy also failed to capture Jobson, the crook. The offices of the Keystone Company were at Wilkes-Barre, and thither Mr. Taylor went as soon as he had straightened matters up in the village. He saw the president and a couple of the directors, and told them the story of the robbery of the office at the mine, and how Dick Darrell had captured the leader of the enterprise and recovered the stolen money-box, with its contents intact, from the crook who had looted the safe.

"How long has this boy been with the company?" asked the president.

"Close on to five years," replied the superintendent. "He began as a mule driver in the mine, and about nine months ago he was transferred to the engine-room. The engineer reports

him as an uncommonly smart lad, and worthy of any recognition the company thinks proper to bestow on him in connection with this matter."

"Send him to my office tomorrow," said the president.

That afternoon at four Dick had a short interview with the superintendent after his return from Wilkes-Barre. Mr. Taylor handed him a pass over the railroad line to Wilkes-Barre, telling him to report at the president's office in that city next day. That evening Dick visited Jason Clark, according to his promise, and found the hermit expecting him. He told the old man the story of his previous night's and morning's adventures, and how it happened he came to be on the farm at the very moment when the recluse stood most in need of help. They had a long talk, during which the hermit assured Dick that he would remember him when he came to die.

"All I ask in return, Dick," he said, "is that you will visit me twice a week if circumstances will permit. You are the first person I've taken a fancy to in many years, and I feel certain that you deserve the good opinion I've formed of you."

Dick promised to call on him regularly as possible, and then took his leave. Next morning, before he went to Wilkes-Barre, Dick appeared at the examination of Drake and Sanders before Justice Robinson.

Dick told his story once more, and when he had finished there wasn't any doubt among the spectators as to the guilt of the two men. They had nothing to say in their own behalf and were sent to the county jail at Blackton for trial. Dick went to Wilkes-Barre and had a very satisfactory interview with the president of the company, who had him tell his story over again for his benefit and that of the directors who had been summoned to hear it.

A special meeting was convened and a resolution was introduced tendering Dick Darrell a vote of thanks for his conduct in saving the company's money and catching Martin Drake, the chief rascal. Dick was also voted a reward of \$1,000 as an evidence of the company's appreciation of his valuable services, and he carried the money back with him on the train as far as Blackton, where he deposited it in a savings bank. Then the boy, now a very popular personage in the village, went back to work in the engine-room, just as if nothing out of the common had happened to him.

Two weeks later Hissop and Keating were caught by the Philadelphia police and Constable Green went to that city to bring them to Blackton, where they were locked up pending their trial. The trial of the four men came off in about six weeks, and they were easily convicted on Dick's testimony. They received ten years each. A second indictment was found against Martin Drake for his crime on Jason Clark, but this was to stand over till the rascal had served his ten years. Then he would be tried on that count, the authorities securing the hermit's sworn statement as to the facts, as it was not expected the old man would be alive when the trial would come off.

In addition to his reward of \$1,000, Dick's pay was raised, and he was slated for early advancement in the company's service. The post of night watchman around the engine-house and breaker

becoming vacant, Dick secured it for old Ben Blossom on his consenting to sign the pledge and keep sober. Ben, who thought a whole lot of Dick, turned over a new leaf from the date of his appointment and kept his word to drink no more. Three months passed during which Dick visited Jason Clark with unfailing regularity. The old hermit became more and more attached to the bright, sturdy boy who had saved him from the fiendish torture that Martin Drake had started to inflict on him in order to ascertain the secret of his alleged treasure chest.

One day Jason Clark sent to Blackton for the lawyer who had drawn up his will in which he had left everything he owned to various charities. The hermit ordered a new will to be prepared in which he left his farm, as well as all his personal property, and everything else of value which he possessed, to Dick Darrell, subject to certain charitable bequests of an unimportant character. One evening when Dick visited the old recluse he was surprised to see no light in the windows of the sitting-room. As the kitchen door, by which he always entered, was not secured, the boy had no trouble in getting into the house.

Dick entered the sitting-room and found the fire out. In his easy chair before the fender sat the hermit, stiff and cold in death, his staring eyes proclaiming the fact at once.

"Good gracious! He's dead!" gasped Dick, gazing at the fallen jaw and ghastly-looking eyes. "Stone cold, too. Must have died many hours ago, possibly yesterday. Poor old chap. What he always dreaded has come to pass at last. For some strange reason, which he never told me, he did not want to die. And yet I never could see what pleasure he could find in living the way he did. The very last time I was here he told me he had made a new will and left me his farm and everything he owned. He said Lawyer Carter, of Blackton, had the will and would see that I got what was coming to me. He told me this farm would make me rich, as it stood over one of the most valuable coal beds in the county. The Keystone and Lehigh Valley coal companies had offered him a big sum for the farm. He advised me by no means to sell the property when I came of age, but to form a company and mine the coal on an independent basis, which I could readily do, as he owned the right of way to the river, where the coal could be shipped independently of the railroad company. Well, I must notify the undertaker and the coroner, and also Lawyer Carter, of the old man's death. I suppose I ought to take charge of the premises till the lawyer arrives."

Thus speaking Dick hurried back to the village with his melancholy tidings.

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

Dick carried the intelligence of the hermit's death to Constable Green, who at once notified the Blackton coroner to come over and investigate the cause of the old man's sudden taking off, which the officer said was probably due to natural causes. He requested him to notify Lawyer Carter so that arrangements could be made for the recluse's burial. Dick, the constable and Micky Grady went to the farm that night and remained in charge of the body.

The coroner came over next morning, accompanied by the lawyer and an undertaker. After looking the corpse over the county officials gave a permit for its burial and the undertaker proceeded to get the body ready for interment.

The lawyer bought a small plot in the Blackton cemetery, and all that was mortal of Jason Clark was taken there and buried, Dick acting as chief mourner. After all was over the lawyer took Dick to his office, read the old man's will to him, and handed him a sealed letter directed to him in the hermit's handwriting.

"The farm is a very valuable property, young man," said Lawyer Carter. "I know that Jason Clark refused \$150,000 from the Lehigh Valley Coal Company for it. It will be necessary that the court appoint a guardian for you until you come of age. Have you any preference in the matter?"

"If it is necessary for me to have a guardian I should like to have Mr. Murray, the Keystone Company's engineer, appointed, as I know him to be a square man, and I am sure he will look after my interests as if they were his own."

"Very well. I will go to the village and see Mr. Murray about the matter," said the lawyer.

Dick did not open the hermit's letter until he got back to the village, then he discovered to his surprise that Jason Clark had been indeed something of a miser, for he told in the letter about a small chest of gold, containing coin to the value of something like \$80,000, that was concealed under the flooring of his bedroom on the second floor. All this money was to revert to Dick Darrell.

Mr. Murray accepted the guardianship of Dick, and the lawyer duly secured his appointment. Darrell showed him the dead recluse's letter, and together they went to the old house on the farm, found the chest and gold intact, and removed it to the vaults of the Blackton Bank.

Mr. Murray advised Dick to resign his job with the company and enter an academy at Wilkes-Barre so as to lay the foundation, at least, of a good education. Dick agreed that that would be the best thing for him to do, though he hated to leave the village, his old associates, with whom, now that he was known to be rich, he was more popular than ever, and above all, Myrtle Blossom. He held an interview with the girl on the subject, and it was a tearful one on her part.

"I don't want you to go away, Dick," she sobbed. "I don't know how I will get along without you. You've been like a brother to Pansy and me ever since father took to idleness and drink."

But your father is all right now," said Dick.

"Thanks to your efforts he is; but will he hold out after you are gone?"

"Mr. Murray, my guardian, will make it his business to keep him in hand, Myrtle."

"And you really intend to leave us?"

"It is best for me that I should, and I know you think too much of me to stand in my light."

"I do, I do," sobbed the girl.

"And you always will, won't you, Myrtle?" he said, putting his arms around her.

"Always," she replied, laying her head on his shoulder.

"And you love me enough to promise to become my wife some day?" he asked.

The girl began to cry.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"You are rich. You told me that Mr. Murray said you would be easily worth a quarter of a million when you reached your twenty-first birthday. Surely you cannot want a poor girl like me for your wife."

"I want nobody else but you. Will you marry me by and by?"

But Myrtle wouldn't say "Yes."

All she would say was that she loved him with all her heart—that she would never love any one else—that she would leave him free to find any other girl he might learn to prefer to her; but if when he came of age he still wished her to marry him he must come to her home and ask her the question again.

So Dick went to Wilkes-Barre satisfied that she would ultimately become his if they both lived.

Three years passed away, during which Dick frequently visited the mining village to see his guardian and Myrtle. One day, he Mr. Murray and Lawyer Carter went to the court and the legal proceedings that made Dick Darrell his own boss were put through, and the engineer was discharged from his position as the boy's guardian. During the interval since the hermit's death the farm was leased to a Swede at a nominal rent, and this farmer made a pretty good thing out of it for himself. Dick notified him that he would have to leave at the expiration of his lease, which would not be renewed. Darrell, with the help of Lawyer Carter, formed the Black Diamond Coal Mining Company, an independent concern, and in due time operations began on the farm. The property was found to be rich in a high-grade of coal and Dick Darrell was elected president and general manager of the new corporation.

Then it was that he asked Myrtle Blossom the all-important question again, and this time her answer was "Yes," though Dick had no doubt of that all along. He gave her father a sinecure in the employ of the company, and also appointed Mr. Murray as his chief engineer at a fat salary. He didn't forget Micky Grady, who was now seventeen, and put him into the office, where he had every chance for advancement. Micky told him that he meant to become cashier some day.

"And when I get there," he said, wagging his head in a solemn way, "I'm going to become your brother-in-law."

"Then you're going to marry Pansy?" laughed Dick.

"That's what I'm going to do."

"Sure she'll have you, eh?"

"If she doesn't she'll miss the chance of her life," grinned Micky.

And now, reader, I have come to the end of my story, which is the history of a real boy who, through nerve, energy and good luck, rose from a humble position in the engine-house of the Keystone Coal Mining Company to the office of general manager of the Black Diamond Coal Mining Company, today one of the most important corporations in the Pennsylvania coal fields.

Next week's issue will contain "UNDER A LUCKY STAR; OR, THE BOY WHO MADE A MILLION IN WALL STREET."

WILL, THE WAGON BOY

or, The Diamonds that Came by Express

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued)

Had he seen the murder committed? It began to look so. Will's fear of the man increased. He would have run away then if the chance had offered. He determined not to let another chance slip; that he had rather face the consequences of arrest than to remain in the power of such a man.

But the doctor's answer to Detective Keene's proposition to come to terms gave, for the time being an altogether different turn to the affair.

"Come!" he exclaimed. "You are sharper than I thought for, Mr. Detective. I may as well admit that you are right, and that I have the diamonds. What then? What terms do you expect me to make?"

"My terms are simple," replied Keene, with a triumphant chuckle. "Turn them over to me, and I will proceed no further in this affair."

"All?"

"All!"

"Of course, it is your intention to restore them to Madame Sandusky?"

"Never mind what my intentions are in that case. If you refuse my terms my intentions are to arrest you and turn you over to the police on a charge which will put you in such a deep hole that you will never get out again—see?"

"And you will leave me nothing?"

"Oh, you can keep a few of the smaller stones, if you wish. I suppose you will have to have something to pay you for your trouble."

"Very good. I accept your terms," said the doctor, rising. "Come with me."

"Hold on! You must have the diamonds on you now."

"There you are dead wrong."

"But you found them this morning."

"Wrong again. My visit to Kutter's old place this morning was for an entirely different purpose. If you want the diamonds, follow me."

Tom Keene looked as if he was but half convinced.

As for Will, he was completely puzzled.

Of course he felt very certain that Dr. Pajaro did not have the diamonds, with the exception of the Great Ghorgee. What, then, did he mean to do?

Will was soon to know.

The doctor pushed open the door and led the way through the dining-room into a little surgical operating-room which was located in an extension to the main house.

He did not enter this room himself, but stood aside, and motioned the detective in.

"Stand there by that table, and I will get the diamonds," he said.

"You don't leave me!" cried Keene, fiercely.

"No, but you leave me!" hissed the doctor.

He raised his hand, and quick as lightning

pressed some hidden spring concealed in the casing of the door.

Instantly the detective vanished, and a terrific cry rang out through the room.

A square of the flooring had dropped beneath his feet.

He heard a splash follow the cry, and the trap door flew back into place.

That settles the detective!" chuckled Dr. Pajaro smiling: "Now, Will!"

And going back into the dining-room, and putting his hand into a silver water pitcher which stood on the table, held up the diamond, which sparkled and glittered like a blazing star.

CHAPTER XV.

Will and the Doctor in Trouble Again.

"Quick," said the doctor. "Will, we can't get out of this house too soon! Here! You take the diamond. I trust you as I would my brother. It is safer with you than it is with me until we can get safely beyond the reach of these crooked detectives and the police."

"No, no! You had better keep it," said Will, drawing back.

"Do as I tell you," said the doctor, hissing. "Put it in the inside pocket of your coat. Come!"

Will could not refuse. There was something strange in the influence which Doctor Pajaro seemed to exert over him.

While he certainly was not hypnotized in the full sense of the word, he must have been so to some extent.

He accordingly took the diamond as ordered, and together they left the sanitarium.

The cab still stood at the door, and the driver looked at them uneasily.

"Will the boss be out soon?" he asked.

"In just about two minutes," replied the doctor. "He told me to tell you."

He hurried off toward the avenue, closely followed by Will.

As they turned the corner Will looked behind him.

"See anything of him?" demanded the doctor.

"No."

"Probably he is having it out with Rumbajo. He may find that he has his hands full to get the best of the old fellow and make his escape."

"Then he is not dead?"

"Dead nothing. Why should I kill him? I only let him drop off my diving board."

"Your diving board?"

"Yes. Wait a minute, and I'll tell you all about it. Here, driver! Hey! Do you want a fare?"

An empty cab was passing.

The driver answered the hail, and the doctor giving him the order to drive down Broadway, they both got in and were whirled away.

"Safe again," said the doctor, leaning back and beginning to roll a cigarette. "Heavens, what a relief! I was at my wit's ends to know what to do with that fellow at one time. It was only at the last moment that the idea occurred to me that the very best thing I could do as to give him a bath."

"I thought you had done him up altogether," said Will.

"Not by any means. I'm no such fool. The man is known. His cab was at the door. If I killed him—and I could easily have done it—I should have soon found myself in all kinds of trouble. That trap-door was right over the swimming tank of my Turkish bath. You know that it is good and deep, for you have been in it many a time. I had the trap made solely for my own use, for if there is anything I enjoy it is a sudden plunge into cold water. It was my daily custom to strip, stand on the trap-door, have a helper press the spring, and down I went."

"Then he got nothing worse than a wetting."

"That's all, unless the shock killed him, which I hope it didn't, for I don't want any further trouble with the man. Give me the diamond, Will."

Only too glad to get rid of it, Will handed over the wonderful stone.

The doctor placed it in the palm of his hand and looked at it lovingly.

"It is not the largest diamond in the world, nor by any means the most valuable," he said, "for it contains several bad flaws, but to me and my people it is everything. Well, the thing is to get out of the country with it before any one else interferes with us. We must start today. I think we will go by the way of Boston. The first first thing is to find out when the steamer sails for Europe, and then to lose ourselves for the rest of the day. You are not quite so anxious to go to India with me as you were, Will."

"No, I am not. I don't want to go," replied Will, in a low voice. "I wish you would let me leave you and go off by myself. I'll take my chances of being arrested. I don't want to have anything more to do with this business, I tell you that straight."

"And that is because you think I murdered Karl Kutter," replied the doctor. "Isn't it so?" Will was silent.

"You might as well own up," said the doctor. "I can read your thoughts."

"It is so."

"But I did not do it, and yet I was in that vacant office, just as the detective said."

"Why did you go there?"

"Why? To get the Great Ghorgee, to be sure."

"How could you possibly know that it was coming there?"

"That you were to bring it there in your wagon, you mean to say. Well, I did not know it; but I will tell you how it came about. For a long time I have been watching for my chance to get the diamond. Just before I came to this country I went to Bulgaria and made careful inquiries about it, for I knew the stone was there in the possession of Prince Pojemkin, who was then alive. I met with no success so far as getting possession of the stone was concerned, but from what I learned I felt sure that the diamonds of the old prince would go to Madame Sandusky when he died, and I engaged a certain person who was very close to the prince to keep me informed."

"This was done. As soon as the prince died I was notified of the contents of his will, so I was on the lookout for the diamonds long before they arrived."

"You seem to be able to do whatever you want," broke in Will. "I never saw such a fellow as you are."

"I get there," laughed the doctor. "It is partly through my money, and as I told you before, I have plenty of it, and it is partly fate, I like to think. It was certainly fate which threw you into my hands and it was the same when one of the examiners in the public stores of the Custom House became a patient of mine. The fellow—no matter about his name—was a crook clear through, but a great coward. By the merest accident I found out what position he held in the stores, and I put it up to him to help me get the diamond, promising that he should have all the rest of the stones if he would help me to get the Great Ghorgee. He agreed to the plan, and fixed it up with one of his associates at the stores, who took Joe Martin into the deal. The plan was to change the packages and let you take the Pojemkin package to Kutter, just as it came about. I think Martin meant to turn on the other and make off with the whole business, but for some unknown reason he never came. I went to the building with my patient and we took our places in the vacant office, waiting for you to come with your wagon, which you finally did."

"You were there long before I came, then?" demanded Will, becoming intensely interested now.

"We waited for you more than two hours, and when you came at last we——"

Right here at the critical point in Dr. Pajaro's narrative it was suddenly cut short.

There was a sharp cry, a rumble of wheels, and then a crash.

The next Will knew the cab was a wreck, and they were dragged over the pavement.

Dr. Pajaro was clutching him around the body and yelling like a lunatic.

Bump, they went against something, and then came another mix-up, and a crowd had gathered about them, while a large automobile was flying off in the distance, with a policeman blowing his whistle for those ahead to stop it.

Will scrambled to his feet uninjured, but Dr. Pajaro, profusely bleeding, lay amidst the wreck of the cab, with closed eyes, as one dead.

It was fortunate for Will that his wig was a tight-fitting affair, for had it not been, discovery might have followed, for there were three policemen already at the scene of the wrck.

There had been two collisions, it appeared.

In the first place, the cab ran against an electric car and was slung diagonally across the street, and then before the driver could gain control of his frightened horse the auto struck the cab, completely demolishing it.

While the horse ran one way, the auto went speeding off in the other direction.

Whether the police succeeded in capturing it or not Will never knew.

Just now his whole attention was taken up with Doctor Pajaro, who was certainly very seriously injured, if not dead.

As for our hero himself, by rare good fortune he appeared to have escaped without a scratch.

Of course, Will was pressed for the doctor's name and address.

He felt sure that the doctor would not want him to give it, at least not until his fate was decided; so he answered, what was the truth, that he did not know his companion's name.

(To be continued)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

MILLIONS OF PHONE BOOKS

About 1,500 different telephone directories, with an aggregate circulation of 25,000,000 copies a year, are issued by the principal telephone system in the United States. To print and distribute the directories costs the corporation approximately \$8,000,000 a year.

VENTILATOR SPEAKER.

Traveling on board the *S. S. California*, with a portable radio receiver, Ethel Hirsch enjoyed a concert so much that she dropped the ear-phones into one of the ship's giant ventilators and immediately passengers everywhere on deck could hear the concert.

DEADLY LOUSE

The blue louse is attacking the partridges in Aroostook and Washington Counties, Me., is the story brought home by several hunters. It attacks the head, boring through the skin toward the back of the neck until it finds a joint in the vertebrae, where it penetrates to the spinal cord and kills the bird.

TEMPERATURE OF PLANETS

The last authoritative study on the temperature of the planets gives as the most reliable values of the surface temperatures: Venus, 45 degrees C.; Mars, 15 degrees C.; Jupiter and Saturn, 80 degrees C.; the value for Venus being somewhat doubtful, but the others much more trustworthy.

UNIQUE HORSE PHOTOS

From a seat suspended 50 feet above the ground, an osteologist of the American Museum of Natural History took photographs of a trotting horse speeding below. In this way he obtained accurate records of the motion of the spine and muscles in action. These records are being used in mounting the bones of Lee Axworthy, the champion trotting stallion of the world, so as to show him in the gait with which he made his record of 1.58 1-4.

"ELECTRIC LIGHT" BED

An "electric light" bed has been constructed and used by a Washington physician, who claims that it has given him better general health and has apparently eliminated colds.

An ordinary bed is used, and above it is suspended an inverted box about 7 feet long, 2 feet wide and 2 feet deep. This box is slung on window sash weights, by which it can be lowered toward the mattress. Inside the box are eight to ten electric lights. When retiring at night the doctor stretches out on the mattress, nude, and allows the lights to bathe his body. A thermostat, set by the sleeper before retiring, turns off the lights when the heat warms the bed above the set temperature, and turns them on when it gets too cold. A rheostat allows the sleeper to turn the current to varying intensities.

The arrangement is said to rest on the theory that in the earlier evolutionary period of man, no clothing was used, and sunlight constantly warmed the skin and set the blood in motion.

LAUGHS

Pastor—I hea' we got a diamond pin in de collection plate this mornin', sah. Treasurer—You are mistaken, sah. It was a dime an' pin.

"They tell me you love good music," said the lady, playing at the piano, to her musical friend. "Oh," said the polite friend, "that doesn't matter. Pray go right on."

"It's lucky I should meet you, Smith. There's a little bill you owe Timkins, the tailor. He's commissioned me to collect it." "Has he, old man? Well, I'm glad you've got a permanent job at last."

First Office Boy—I told the governor to look at the dark circles under my eyes and see if I didn't need a half-day off. Second Office Boy—What did he say? First Office Boy—He said I needed a bar of soap.

"I don't want to appear boastful," said the artist, "but the beauty of my pictures render people absolutely speechless." "Hooray!" exclaimed the weary-looking visitor, "I must bring my wife to see them!"

Aleck, who is a very "smart Aleck," indeed, came rushing in to his mother, saying: "Mamma, did you know they had closed the City Library?" "No, Aleck. Why?" "Because they found small-pox in the dictionary."

"Mrs. Alden has five children; if there were seven more, how many children would Mrs. Alden have?" Several hands were raised. "Anna may tell us," said the teacher. "How many children would she have, Anna?" "Enough."

Tommy arrived home one day with a nice new golf ball. "Look at the lost ball I found on the links, pa," he said. "But are you sure, Tommy," asked his father, "that it was a lost ball?" "Oh, yes," said the boy. "I saw the man and his cad-die looking for it."

ENGINE AND ELEPHANT

I worked on the Jubbulpore road when it was built. I took the first locomotive over portions of the line as fast as the rails were laid.

It went through the wildest jungles, still inhabited by the most savage of wild beasts—elephants were as plentiful along the road as chickens along the Melville & Northern.

"Gannon, you will run your engine and tender five miles farther than you have been yet," said Mr. Bell, the contractor, to me one morning. "You will run very carefully, for the track has not been proved yet. In the afternoon, if everything is right, a party will go down with you in a passenger car."

This part of the route was through the wildest section of the country. I had not yet seen it, for I had been employed in bringing up iron and other supplies to the depot. My fireman, or, as I should have called him in India, "my mate," was a Scotchman by the name of McNabb.

He had come out to India to be an engine-driver, or engineer, as we say.

He was a very competent man, but there was no situation for him when he arrived.

His machine had not come from England. He was very uneasy and cross-grained in his inferior position. He wanted my place and pay. He was jealous of me and had done his best to supplant me.

Of course, my relations with him on the foot-board were not pleasant. I said very little to him and tried to get along peaceably.

I started the machine for the first trip through the wild jungle. The road lay on or near a considerable stream.

As I had been directed to do, I ran very carefully, making not more than five miles an hour. This was a creeping pace for the engine, and, as the earth was not very solid, it made hardly any noise.

"See on the river!" said McNabb suddenly, as he pointed over the boiler; and the cab on the engine is an American institution.

"What is it?" I asked, looking in the direction he indicated.

"Why, man, don't you see that big tiger?" he added very impatiently, as though it was stupid of me not to see the animal.

"I see him now," I answered, as I discovered an enormous tiger in the gloomy shade of some overhanging trees on the border of the river. He had come to the stream to drink.

As the engine noiselessly approached the spot the tiger raised his head and bestowed a patronizing glance upon it. He did not seem to be at all alarmed; on the contrary, he looked as though he owned that jungle and the machine was an intruder upon his domain.

"He takes it coolly," I remarked to McNabb, for I could not help being civil even to my enemy in the face of such a novel sight as a royal Bengal tiger.

"He is an ugly fellow and you had better hurry out of his way," added the fireman in a surly tone.

"I don't think he will meddle with the engine," I replied.

I had seen several of these beasts along the road, but not one that could compare in size and dignity with this fellow. I had reduced the speed of the engine till it hardly moved, so that I could get a better view of him. He was as handsome as a picture.

As we came nearer to him he gave a prolonged growl, as though he was not satisfied to have us invade his territory.

"Pull out your throttle, man!" said my mate sharply; and he was evidently very much alarmed at the presence of the tiger.

"I don't think he will care to meddle with the engine," I added, still gazing at the beautiful beast.

"If you don't go ahead I will start the valve for you," continued McNabb angrily.

"No, you won't! If you meddle with the throttle I will pitch you off the foot-board and you may fight the tiger on foot if you want to do so," I responded, irritated at his threat.

"You have no right to keep me in peril of my life, Gannon. If you choose to expose yourself that's another thing, and you can do it if you like."

I did not care to debate the question with him, for he was disposed to find fault with everything I did. I blew the whistle to see how the sound would affect the tiger. It startled him, but it seemed to arouse his ire. He showed no inclination to run away, as I thought he would do when he heard the strange noise. He looked for an instant at the engine and then fixed his gaze upon me. I never saw such a pair of eyes. They seemed to be coals of fire. I pulled out the throttle, for I felt as though the animal was fascinating me, as a snake does a bird.

The increased speed of the locomotive appeared to kindle the wrath of the tiger. Very likely he had an idea that the ponderous machine was about to make an attack upon him, for suddenly he bounded toward it.

"There, man, he will tear us in pieces!" shouted McNabb, terrified by the movements of the beast.

My mate climbed upon the fender, behind which the engine driver and stoker stand. But the tiger did not come near the tender; and until he attacked us in that direction I felt that there was no danger. If he leaped upon the forward part of the machine I could bewilder him with the steam. The tiger was no sneak. He placed himself in front of the engine, as though he scorned to make an assault in the rear of his foe. I had no speed on, and, before I could get well under way, the animal was crouching for a spring.

"Urump! Urump! Urump!"

We heard this noise just ahead of the engine. It consisted of three enormous grunts, with a heavy blowing sound.

"An elephant!" gasped McNabb as he leaped down from his perch on the fender. I looked ahead and there, upon the track, was a monstrous elephant, the largest one I had ever seen up to that time. I have heard of elephants 16 feet high, but there never was one. This one was nine, and I have seen one that was very nearly 10 feet high.

When I saw that the tiger was about to spring upon the engine I let off all the steam I could. It seemed to bother the animal.

"Urmph! Urmph! Urmph!" grunted the big elephant, and his cry was hoarsely savage.

"More steam! more steam, McNabb!" I called to my frightened mate.

He was so nearly paralyzed with fear that he could hardly shovel the coal into the furnace. I had shut off the steam, for I had no idea of bumping into the monster that had taken possession of the track.

The tiger made this spring. He aimed at the part over the cylinder. I opened the steam upon him. As I had hoped and believed, he did not like this mode of warfare. At the same time I reversed the engine and began to back it. The motion of the machinery bothered the tiger and very likely his paws were pinched by it. At any rate, he beat a hasty retreat, dropping off the machine in front of the boiler. As I backed out of the way the elephant roared again, and then made for the tiger. Not one in ten of these huge animals will venture to attack a tiger, even after long trailing for the purpose of hunting them. The big fellow in front of the engine was alone, though they generally go in herds of from 10 to 30. A solitary elephant is a dangerous one. He is too irritable to live with the others and is called a "rogue" in India, sometimes a "mad elephant." The monster before us was one of this kind. He went for the tiger. A fierce fight ensued. In the end the elephant crushed the royal beast under his feet. He got his trunk around his neck as he leaped upon his back. Dragging him down, he placed his foot upon him.

The enraged monster did not seem to be satisfied with what he had done. He plainly had a grudge against the engine, and with a succession of grunts he rushed upon the machine. McNabb yelled with terror when he saw him coming. I pulled out the throttle and gave the engine all the speed I could. The big beast had a clear road before him and before I could get fairly under way he put the end of his trunk on the right cylinder. I opened the clearing cocks and let him have all the steam that would pass through them. But the cylinder and piston-rod were hot and the moment the elephant touched them he was glad to let go. He retreated a short distance and then began to sway back and forth and whirl about, roaring fiercely all the time. I stopped the engine.

"Don't stop, man" pleaded McNabb. "He'll be at us again."

"I am not going to give up the trip on account of any of these beasts," I replied.

"But the elephant is on the track and you can't get by him," added the fireman.

It was a down grade and we had to hold the machine with the brake. I made up my mind to go ahead again, whatever happened, and I told McNabb so.

"Then I will leave you. I won't risk my life in this way," he answered, and he jumped down.

The fellow was a fool, and I told him so. He was safer on the engine than on the ground. I pulled out the throttle and the engine went rapidly down the incline. I gave her more steam as fast as I could.

As I approached the elephant I thought he would have sense enough to get out of the way. But instead of doing that he dropped his head, as if to bring his long tusks to bear on the machine, and then rushed upon the machine. The

machine struck the monster. The shock was tremendous and I was afraid the engine would be thrown from the tracks. In place of that the beast seemed to be pitched aside, or he jumped aside, if that were possible. I think he went down and was rolled out of the way. I ran on for some time until I heard a fearful yell from McNabb. I looked back and saw the mad elephant rushing upon him. He did not seem to have the power to move out of danger. I reversed the engine and then ran back in order to save him. Again I hit the monster with the back of the tender just as he was upon the fireman. The shock upset him again and he rolled out of the way of the machine. I went by him far enough to get a good start for another hit at him. The rascal acted as though he was iron-clad, for he picked himself up and rushed back upon the track. At this moment McNabb yelled again, and his cry attracted the attention of the mad beast.

The fireman had retreated into the jungle a little way. I saw the elephant charge upon him, but I could not discover with what result. I stopped again and then returned, hoping to make a diversion in favor of my mate. The engine went at a good speed. Before I reached the place where I had last seen the monster he was on the track. He charged on the engine again. The machine struck him fair on the forehead. Over he went and was shoved out of the way by the engine. He did not move again.

I got off and looked him over. The front of his head was entirely beaten in and he was dead. Then I went to look for McNabb. I found him a few rods from the track. He was dead. Half the bones in his body were broken and I had no doubt the mad beast had trampled him to death. If he had stayed on the engine he would have been safe as I was, for steam conquers in the battle between engine and elephant.

TALKING MOVIES ARE USED AT BELL'S SESQUI EXHIBIT

Talking motion pictures through which Thomas A. Watson, 70-year-old co-worker with Alexander Graham Bell, will tell the dramatic story of the invention of the telephone, will enliven the daily program in the theatre housed in the American Telephone and Telegraph Building at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition at Philadelphia.

Admission will be free at all times to the theatre, located in the northern end of Palace of Liberal Arts and Manufactures, just inside the Exposition gates. The structure is brightly decorated, with its ceiling spaced with paintings which depict dramatic stages of the telephone's growth from the time of the first slender wire strand at Boston to the present-day 20,000,000 miles of buzzing wires. Another symbolic series of oils adorns the lobby.

Motion pictures reveal a typical switch-board with skilled operators to show its working and explain the intricate movements. Another miniature switchboard operated by tiny mechanical figures occupies space in the foyer.

George W. Peck, resident manager, is in charge of the exhibit.

CURRENT NEWS

LOSES TEETH; SAVES CHILD

George C. Coulters, of Detroit, lost eleven teeth recently when he turned his auto into a stone wall to save a child.

BABY GRABS AUTO BUMPER; SAVES LIFE

Two-year-old Joseph Lutz saved himself from being crushed to death under an automobile by grabbing the bumper. The child darted from his mother's side on the pavement into the street.

When he was struck he held to the bumper and after being dragged several feet his hold broke dropping him to the street when the car passed over his body without the wheels touching him. He escaped without a scratch.

"WHOOPIING COUGH SCHOOL" OPENED IN NEEDHAM, MASS.

A "whooping cough school" has been opened in Needham, Mass.

The disease has caused many pupils to be absent. Superintendent Davis obtained permission to open a school for whooping cough patients who have sufficiently recovered and thus prevent their failing of promotion.

One group attends in a portable building on the hospital grounds in the morning and another in the afternoon.

HOT WEATHER HIGH UP

The Tropics are not the only place to go for tropical weather. If man could ever get there, he would find a tropical climate far above the earth. At very high altitudes the air becomes extremely warm, according to Dr. H. H. Turner, professor of astronomy at Oxford University.

This statement has been confirmed by observations of meteors entering the earth's atmosphere. Although aviators can only get a few miles off the earth's surface, and unmanned instrument-carrying balloons ascend no more than 20 miles, the observation of meteors or shooting stars, extends knowledge of our atmosphere up to about 50 miles.

DOG'S BARKS GIVE FIRE ALARM; 21 ARE SAVED; FAMILY PET DISAPPEARS AFTER TIMELY WARNING

A five-year-old mongrel, Fritzie, pet of a chauffeur's family, probably saved a score of persons early hours recently by barking an alarm of fire. After policemen and civilians had helped firemen rescue the occupants of 451 and 453 East 163d Street, the Bronx, N. Y., Fritzie ran out, barked some more, frolicked a bit and then disappeared. Whether the dog followed its owner to the new quarters he took up, the whereabouts of which were not learned, no one knew.

Aroused by the dog's barks, William Ruddy, its owner, who lives with his wife and eight children on the top floor of the three-story frame building at 451, opened his hall door. A burst of flame met him. Mrs. Ruddy and the eight children, aroused by the noise, screamed.

Patrolmen Moore and Wagner of the Morrisania station heard the sounds and sent in fire alarms from two boxes. Deputy Chief John F. King arrived and ordered all firemen to drop the

hose lines and concentrate on the rescue work. The three buildings next to 451 are also frame and collectively they are called "The Shacks."

Firemen and policemen, with the aid of John Steprenson, an employe of The Bronx Home News, who backed his car against the building to form a base for a ladder, rescued sixteen persons, including twelve children, from the house at 451. Five more were saved from the adjoining building. Seven tenants and a patrolman suffered from burns and smoke and had to be treated by an ambulance surgeon. The origin of the fire has not been determined.

CONDOR LAYS \$750 EGG IN WASHINGTON ZOO; BUT ORDINARY HEN GETS JOB OF HATCHING CHICK.

An egg worth \$750, the second produced this year, is the latest contribution of the California condor, now a resident of the National Zoological Park, under the Smithsonian Institution. The precious egg will be confided to the incubating care of a domestic hen in the hope that a condor chick may be hatched. Whether an ordinary hen can hatch the egg of a condor is an absorbing question among Smithsonian scientists.

The egg resembles a goose egg in shape and appearance, is four inches long and of flat white color. It is the fifth egg laid by this bird in the twenty years it has lived at the National Zoo. Formerly the eggs were left with the bird for incubation, but she broke them all accidentally. It was for that reason that the last previous egg, laid six weeks ago, was taken from her and confided to a hen for twelve days, when it was found to be infertile.

The great value was put upon the egg because of the rarity of the California condor. The female and two males in the National Zoo, with a younger bird in the zoo in Los Angeles, are believed to be the only specimens of this almost extinct fowl in captivity, and it is thought that there are not more than one hundred in a wild state in Southern and Lower California.

Extinction seems almost inevitable, though this vulture once swarmed over the area between Lower California and the Columbia River in Oregon. Bones found in the La Brea prove that the condor was very common as far back as the Pleistocene Age.

The condor is related to the turkey vulture or turkey buzzard and feeds largely upon carrion. It averages four feet in length and weighs from twenty to twenty-five pounds. Its outstanding characteristic is its great wing spread of more than nine feet, which makes it one of the most powerful fliers among featured creatures. The general plumage of the condor is black with lighter markings about the wings. The head and upper neck are bald, the skin being brilliantly tinted in orange and red. On the neck a ruff stands out like a collar. Male and female are alike in their markings.

The early prospectors of California used the wing quills of the condor to carry their gold dust. The Indians of Central America used wing quills of various large birds for the same purpose centuries ago.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

INTERESTING ARTICLES

CANCER STATISTICS

Encouraging statistics on cancer have come to light recently in a report issued by the New York Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. The increase in cancer deaths has not been as rapid, the report shows, as many crude statistics might indicate.

More accurate diagnosis, no doubt, has something to do with the increase or apparent increase, as it has brought about the recording of cases which a few years ago would not have been detected. Another reason for the increases is the lengthening of the span of life, cancer being notoriously a disease of advanced age.

One of the most interesting points brought out by Dr. Dublin and his coadjutors is that the increase, such as it is, has been confined almost entirely to males. There has been little or no increase among women, although the death rate from this disease has always been higher among women. Another point is that the white race is more susceptible than the colored.

The report states that between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five, it is probable that there has been an actual decline in the percentage of women who died from cancer, and no increase in the percentage of men. This it is thought may be due in part to the campaign of education carried on during the past decade, and to the number of lives saved or prolonged by early surgical intervention.

WHALE HIDE LEATHER

Newfoundland whalers, seized with a spirit of enterprising economy, are reported to be attempting to place whale hide on the market for the manufacture of whale leather. It is not surprising that such an attempt should be made. It must vex the spirit of any whaler of well-balanced mind to see, after all the hardship and danger of his calling, an enormous and altogether disproportionate bulk of his quarry cast away. From a large right whale of, say, 45 to 50 feet in length, about 250 barrels of oil and one and three-quarter tons of boleen, or whale-bone, may be obtained. The remainder of the gigantic carcass, which may be as much as fifty tons, has hitherto been considered useless. The average whale hide if laid out on the ground would cover a surface of nearly 1,500 square feet, at which rate one whale, if its hide could be made into boots and shoes, would fill a West End boot shop. It is hoped that the intestines of the whale will be made remunerative. This product is described as very thin and tough, and suitable for glove manufacturers. Regarding the use of whale for glove making, a Leicester Square firm gave their opinion that the only satisfactory skin yet found for the gloves is goatskin. "It is not unlikely, however," they said, "that whale intestine could be manufactured into good motoring and driving gloves, for which reindeer at present holds the field against all other skins. At various times many skins have been tried, such as the skins of crocodiles, cats, pigs, calves, lambs, and even rats. Many of the men's cheap dress gloves on the market are made in Naples of the

skins of the local sewer rats. But practically all the skins mentioned have been found treacherous. Glove skins must not only be pliable, but also perfectly tough and firm, since they have to be sewn up right at the edge. If whale intestine be found to possess these three qualities no doubt there would be a market for whale gloves."

NEW GAS FUEL WILL DRIVE SUPER-ZEPPELIN; DISCOVERY HAILED AS NOTABLE STEP IN AVIATION

A newly discovered gas, marking one of the greatest advances in aviation, will be used for fuel instead of gasoline in Germany's super-zeppelin, now under construction at Friederichsafen under the direction of Dr. Hugo Eckener. Not only will this gas be a great step in making flying safer, but it will enable longer flights and at higher speed.

The discovery, which was made by Doctor Lempertz, a chemist on the staff of the Zeppelin works, has been thoroughly tested in Maybach motors similar to those on the Los Angeles. Only a slight alteration in motors is necessary to fit them for using the new fuel.

One cubic metre of the new gas develops 25 per cent. more power than a kilogram of gasoline, according to tests and it is less expensive than gasoline, since by doing away with the weight of gasoline and tanks and by keeping the ship always at the same weight it is unnecessary to blow off large quantities of hydrogen in order to compensate for the loss of weight through fuel consumption. Since compensation for loss of weight is unnecessary when using the new gas it will increase the average speed of the ship, and since hydrogen gas cells do not need frequent filling it will permit landings to be made anywhere.

With the changed construction of the Zeppelin it will be possible to carry almost double the amount of fuel in gas form than could be taken in gasoline. Since there is no waste in inflating gas it would make the use of helium practical from a financial standpoint.

The new airship is designed to contain 105,000 cubic metres, which is 50 per cent. more than the Los Angeles. Like the American ship it will be equipped with five Maybach motors, developing 420 horsepower each. Also the new craft will be considerably longer but less in circumference.

The super-Zeppelin, which will bear the factory name, LZ-127, will be completed by the Autumn of 1927, according to Doctor Eckener.

The money for starting the construction of this craft was raised from popular subscription, and it is to be used for polar and other expeditions.

Now that restrictions on Germany's building of Zeppelins have been raised, it is believed that construction can be begun on types suitable for passenger and freight service for great distances and that this one will be the first of a big fleet. If the newly found gas replaces gasoline as a fuel as successfully as predicted the Zeppelin will surpass the airplane in usefulness as a transportation utility, according to German aviation experts.

FROM EVERYWHERE

DIZZINESS

Dizziness is entirely unrelated to any disease of the glands of internal secretion, recent experiments have shown. It has previously been thought that some trouble with these glands might be an important factor in causing vertigo.

BOY CARRIED ALOFT, KILLED BY
TORNADO

Two persons were killed and forty-one hurt in a tornado which struck at Clarinda, Iowa, and at Torrington, Wyoming, reports reaching here say.

Floyd Usher, twelve, was killed when the tornado caught him in a pasture of farm field, carried him for several blocks and tore off the right side of his head.

WEED WORTH MILLIONS

A young student at Sat Paulo, Brazil, may save millions of dollars for his country by a new discovery he made recently while working for his doctor's degree. Coffee is shipped from Brazil in sacks made of burlap, which are manufactured from jute, and the Brazilian student, Benedicto Garcez, has found that instead of jute there can be used a weed which grows rank in the pastures and has long been considered a nuisance. Jute is especially liable to damage by moisture, and the fibre from this weed is supposed to be much better in this respect, besides being cheaper.

ACCIDENT FILM

The German Red Cross has recently produced a popular film on first aid and accidents. It is 1,500 meters long and takes fifty-five minutes to run. The film shows how to treat cuts, scratches, burns, fractures and sprains, and those apparently drowned or suffering from exposure. It is planned to be shown not only in Public moving picture theatres, but also to illustrate lectures for factory workers, policemen, members of ambulance corps, nurses and schools and colleges. Red Cross societies of other countries may use this film, either through purchase of copies or by applying for the rights of presentation from the German Red Cross.

DEGREE TO HENRY FORD GIVEN BY
MICHIGAN

To Henry Ford recently was awarded the degree of Doctor of Engineering by the University of Michigan. The degree, the only one ever accepted by the Detroit industrialist, was "in recognition of his material contribution to social welfare and his constructive imagination in the field of industry."

The citation described Mr. Ford as a man "whose genius brought into being an industry that changed the world. Endowed with vision to create, courage to persevere, wisdom to plan and execute, capacity to achieve, he has interpreted business in far-reaching terms of organization and coordination." the citation added.

Ten others received degrees. A Master of Science degree was given to George Byron Haynes of Paris, a graduate of the College of Dental Surgery in 1899, and a Doctor of Science degree to Louis Munroe Dennis, a Michigan alumnus, who is now at the head of the Department of Chemistry at Cornell.

AFTER 25 YEARS OF DUTY

James T. Montgomery, who for twenty-five years stood guard over the Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, died on the eve of the 150th anniversary of the sounding of the famous old bell proclaiming America's independence.

Montgomery, standing at the foot of the winding stairway below, had watched the old relic with care. Day after day he told its story. There was only one thing he wanted—to join in the celebration this year that re-echoes notes of freedom that rang out a century and a half ago.

As guardian of the bell he met many distinguished visitors, but to none did he waive the honor that belongs to it. The Prince of Wales, Marshal Foch, the late King Edward VII of England, Rudyard Kipling and David Lloyd-George were among his acquaintances. To all he told the story of the day the bell was installed until the zigzag crack appeared on its bronze side and stilled it.

SOME STRANGE THINGS IN THE AIR

In foreign dispatches one sometimes encounters interesting news about home. M. Paul Painleve, discoursing on the mechanical control of climate in the *Paris Matin*, has remarked that in America, "if they have not actually begun to attack rain, they have started to war on fog." The common impression, at least along the Atlantic seaboard, is that fog is still having it very much its own way. If there is war on it, it must be a campaign to retire positions prepared in advance.

Beginning with World War bituminous and periodically encouraged by anthracite strikes, the atmosphere of New York City has been by no means always what it used to be. Whether fog becomes more conspicuous with a trimming of soft coal or is actually stimulated into being by soft coal, last winter along the Hudson showed effects comparable with the river Thames in its milder moods. The fog habit once acquired has apparently hung on after the return of anthracite. A June fog accounted for the sinking of the *Washington Irving*.

Along the streets of New York the fog has reinforcements. Grit and lumber-dust and lime and brick dust are plentiful from the vast amount of construction all over town. A new subway in building may be counted upon to make its contribution to the atmosphere for some time to come. The growing use of the sand blast for shampooing and face-lifting the fronts of the older buildings does its bit. Nature, President Lewis of the United Mine Workers and the real estate boom have combined to promote the city's aerial density.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

— LATEST ISSUES —

- 1038 A Fight For Money; or, From School to Wall Street.
- 1039 Stranded Out West; or, The Boy Who Found a Boatman.
- 1040 Ben Bassford's Luck; or, Working on Wall Street Tips.
- 1041 A Young Gold King; or, The Treasure of the Secret Cave.
- 1042 Bound To Get Rich; or, How A Wall Street Boy Made Money.
- 1043 Friendless Frank; or, The Boy who Became Famous.
- 1044 A \$30,000 Tip; or, The Young Weazel of Wall Street.
- 1045 Plucky Bob; or, The Boy Who Won Success.
- 1046 From Newsboy to Banker; or, Rob Lake's Rise in Wall Street.
- 1047 A Golden Stake; or, The Treasure of the Indies.
- 1048 A Grip On the Market; or, A Hot Time In Wall Street.
- 1049 Watching His Chance; or, From Ferry Boy to Captain.
- 1050 A Game for Gold; or, The Young King of Wall Street.
- 1051 A Wizard for Luck; or Getting Ahead in the World.
- 1052 A Fortune at Stake; or, A Wall Street Messenger's Deal.
- 1053 His Last Nickel; or, What It Did for Jack Rand.
- 1054 Nat Noble, the Little Broker; or, The Boy Who Started a Wall Street Panic.
- 1055 A Struggle for Fame; or, The Gamest Boy in the World.
- 1056 The Young Money Magnate; or, The Wall Street Boy who Broke the Market.
- 1057 A Lucky Contract; or, The Boy Who Made a Raft of Money.
- 1058 A Big Risk; or, The Game That Won.
- 1059 On Pirate's Isle; or, The Treasure of the Seven Craters.
- 1060 A Wall Street Mystery; or, The Boy Who Beat the Syndicate.
- 1061 Dick Hadley's Mine; or, The Boy Gold Diggers of Mexico.
- 1062 A Boy Stock Broker; or, From Errand Boy to Millionaire.
- 1063 Facing the World; or, A Poor Boy's Fight for Fortune.
- 1064 A Tip Worth a Million; or, How a Boy Worked It In Wall Street.
- 1065 Billy, the Cabin Boy; or, The Treasure of Skeleton Island.
- 1066 Just His Luck; or, Climbing the Ladder of Fame and Fortune.
- 1067 Out With His Own Circus; or, The Success of a Young Barnum.
- 1068 Playing For Money; or, The Boy Trader of Wall Street.
- 1069 The Boy Copper Miner; or, Ted Brown's Rise to Riches.
- 1070 Tips Off the Tape; or, The Boy Who Startled Wall Street.
- 1071 Striking It Rich; or, From Office Boy To Merchant Prince.
- 1072 Lucky in Wall Street; or, The Boy Who Trimmed the Brokers.
- 1073 In a Class by Himself; or, The Plucky Boy Who Got to the Top.
- 1074 Bulling the Marke; or, The Messenger Who Worked a Corner.
- 1075 After the Big Blue Stone; or, The Treasure of the Jungle.
- 1076 Little Jay Perkins, the Broker; or, Shearing the Wall Street "Lambs."
- 1077 The Young Coal Baron; or, Five Years With The Miners.
- 1078 Coining Money; or, The Boy Plunger of Wall Street.
- 1079 Among the Tusk Hunters; or, The Boy Who Found a Diamond Mine.
- 1080 A Game Boy; or, From the Slums to Wall Street.
- 1081 A Waif's Legacy; or, How It Made a Poor Boy Rich.
- 1082 Fighting the Money Kings; or, The Little Speculator of Wall Street.
- 1083 A Boy With Grit; or, The Young Salesman Who Made His Mark.
- 1084 Ted, the Broker's Son; or, Starting Out For Himself.

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